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BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
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HIROAKI SAMURA
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BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
cover colors by **RYAN HILL**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* destroyed by the Itto-*ryū*.

DŌA

Dōa, an Itto-*ryū* warrior, is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing their real connection.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira*, and former head of the disbanded Mugai-*ryū*

GIICHI

Former Mugai-*ryū* assassin, saved Hyakurin from a cruel fate–yet led Manji into Kagimura's clutches.

HYAKURIN

Injured, former Mugai-*ryū* assassin, aiding Rin in her search for Manji.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Burando, Kagimura's lead medical examiner, fails to transfer the powers of the *kessen-chu* to another human, and he loses his grip on reality after too many prisoners die under his watch. When he cracks under pressure, Burando is sentenced to life imprisonment. While searching for Manji, Rin and Hyakurin are disappointed to find that Giichi is now a dispirited, inebriated drifter.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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GLOSSARY

Akahon: Edo-era illustrated novels.

Bangashira: Head of the *banshū.*

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Dōjō: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dōshin: Police constables from the lower ranks of the samurai caste.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of higher rank.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Gō-Rojū: Senior councilors to the shogun, picked from the most trusted feudal lords.

Hatchōbori: A district in Edo, and, in this case, slang for the police constables who patrol that area.

Honchō Suikoden: Also known as the *Yoshino Monogatari.* This Edo epic, published in 1773, was a Japanese re-telling of the Chinese Ming Dynasty classic *Shui-hu chuan,* known in the West as both *The Water Margin* and the *Outlaws of the Marsh.* The Japanese version includes the exploits of an Ainu warlord.

Ittō-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kachi: A foot soldier.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Mugai-ryū: A group of criminals who worked as assassins for the shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets. Disbanded by Habaki Kagimura.

Mutenichi-ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Okara: Soy pulp, soft leftovers from making tofu, used in cooking or eaten alone.

Ryū: A sword school.

Toshū: Leader; master.

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal,* Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika,* a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare," from *su*—"well" + *asti*—"he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika,* which moves in a counterclockwise direction, and is called the *manji* in Japanese. The *sauvastika* generally stands for night, and often for magical practices. The *swastika,* whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

無限の住人

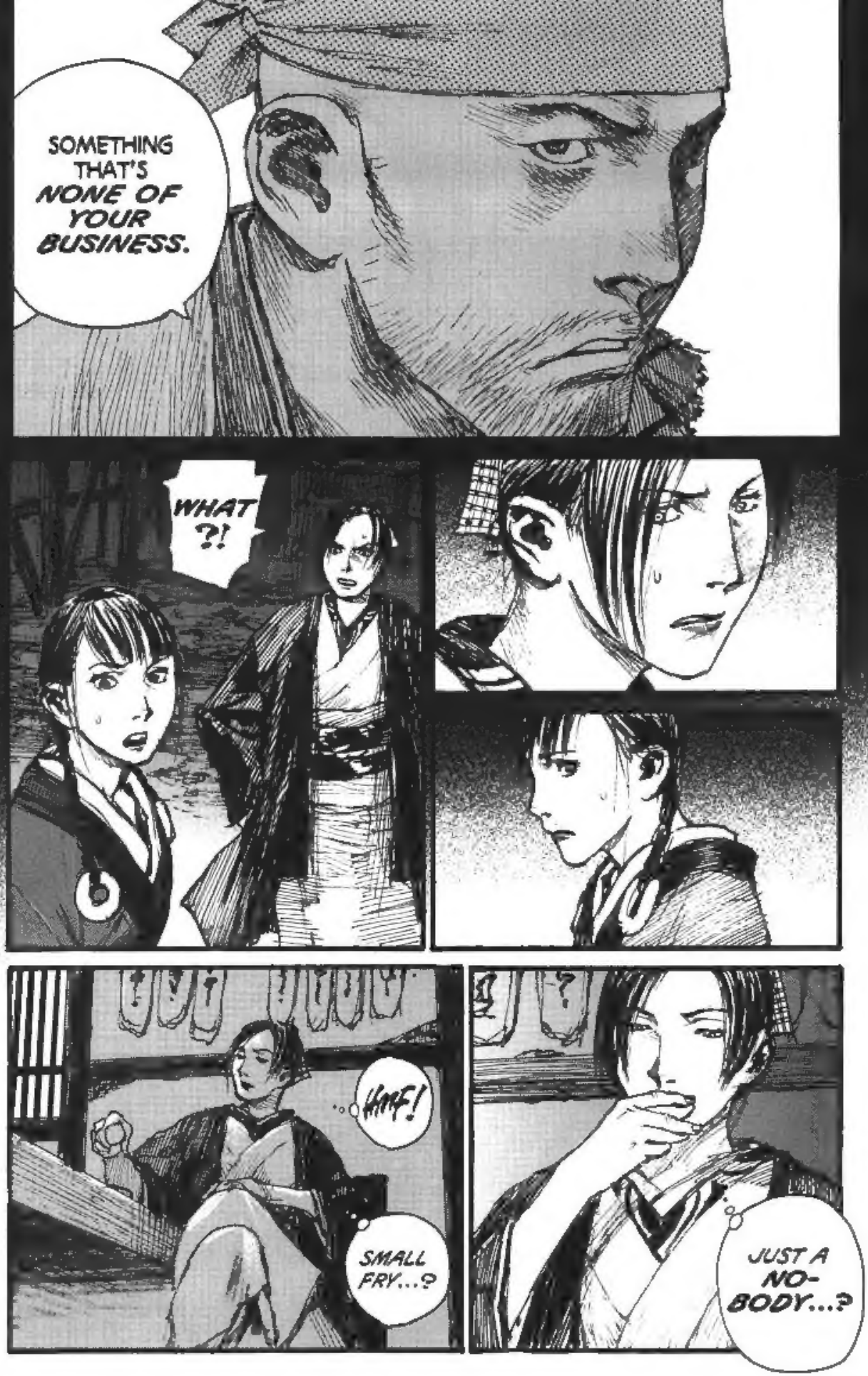
THE SPARROW NET

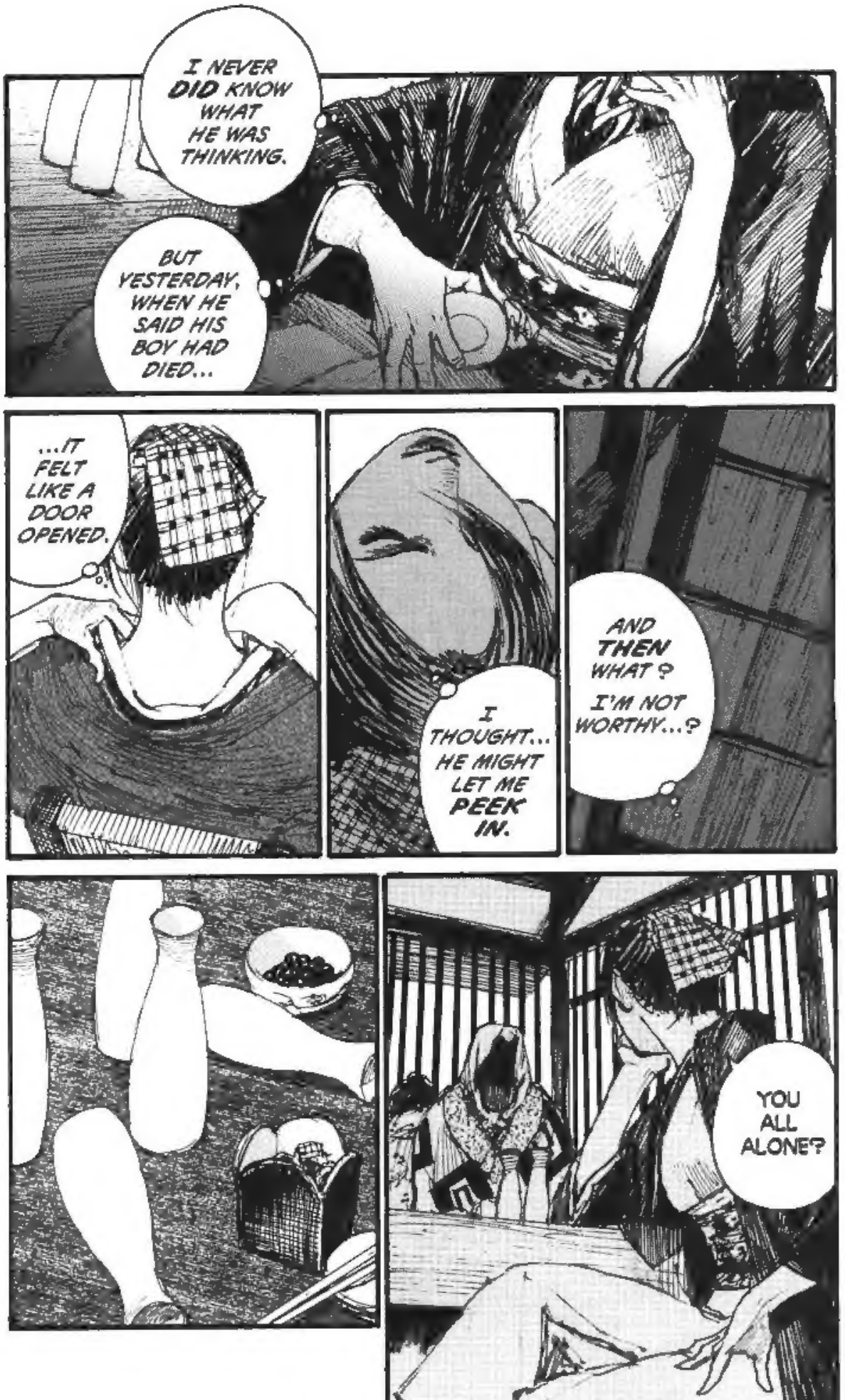
-part one-

ANYONE SITTING HERE?

BLACK SOYBEANS, STEWED VEGGIES, AND *OKARA!*
COMIN' UP!

.....
.....
.....
hmf...
THAT BALD-IE...
HYAKURIN. GO ON AHEAD.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TELL HER.
SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT ME TO KNOW?

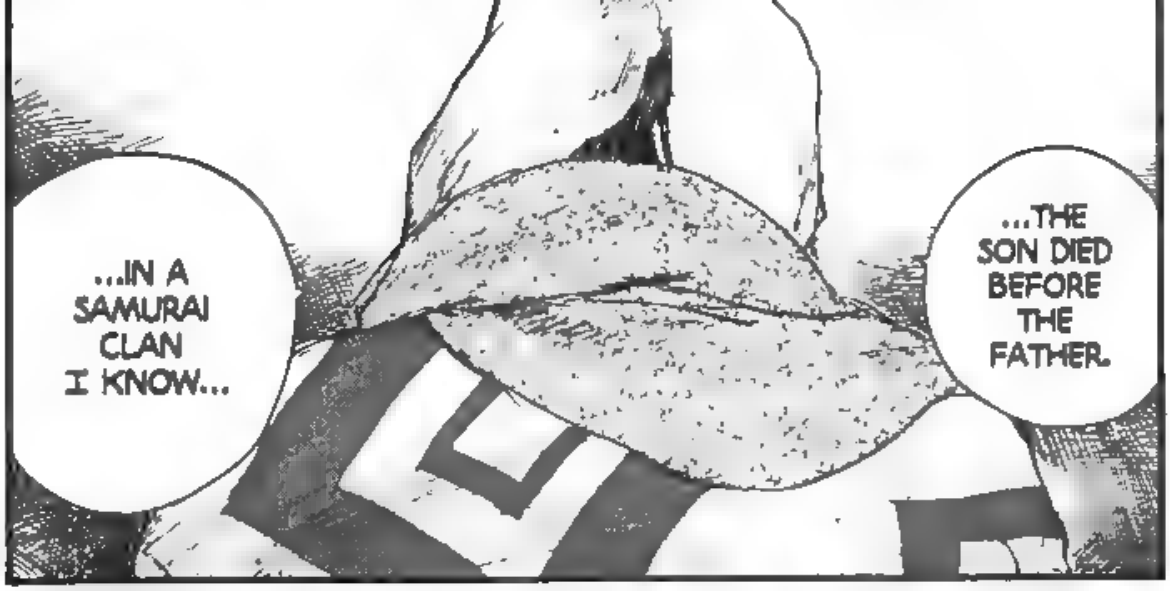

SOMETHING THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
WHAT ?!
HMF!
SMALL FRY...?
JUST A NO-BODY...?


I NEVER DID KNOW WHAT HE WAS THINKING.
BUT YESTERDAY, WHEN HE SAID HIS BOY HAD DIED...
...IT FELT LIKE A DOOR OPENED.
I THOUGHT... HE MIGHT LET ME PEEK IN.
AND THEN WHAT?
I'M NOT WORTHY...?
YOU ALL ALONE?

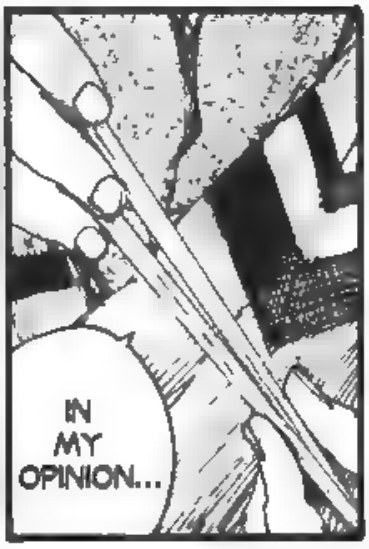
...AS YOU SEE.
OH, NOT THAT.
LIKE, IS THERE A WIFE?
...IN A WAY.
AH HAH HAH! SORRY! BUT DRINKING ALONE, YOU KNOW?
SO DULL YOU JUST DON'T TASTE YOUR SAKE OR FOOD ANYMORE.
ANY KIDS?
...NOT YET.
GUESS NOT. YOU LOOK YOUNG.
BUT DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T WANT AN HEIR?

...HMM... I WONDER.
PERHAPS NOT...
...WOW...
THAT'S PRETTY WEIRD.
I MEAN, EVEN SOME DIRT-POOR SAMURAI OUT THERE WANTS HIS HEIR SO BAD...
...HE'D JUST AS SOON KILL A GIRL AT BIRTH IF IT HELPED HIS SON SURVIVE.
BUT KNOW WHAT? YOU'RE OKAY... WHO NEEDS HEIRS? I FEEL FOR A SAMURAI'S SON.
LAYING ALL THAT PARENTAL SHIT ON HIM. DREAMS. AMBI-TIONS.

IT'S FUNNY WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.
JUST 'CAUSE SOMEONE'S GOT HALF YOUR BLOOD... YOU MAKE *HIM* CLEAN UP YOUR MESS.
I MEAN, WORLD'S *FULL* OF STORIES...
...'BOUT KIDS DYING BEFORE THEIR FOLKS.
OH.
SORRY.
DON'T LISTEN TO ME. I'M JUST... REMEMBER-ING.
ACTUAL-LY...


...IN A SAMURAI CLAN I KNOW...
...THE SON DIED BEFORE THE FATHER.

AND IT SEEMS SOME UNFUL-FILLED DREAMS...
YEAH?
...WERE THEN FORCED UPON THE GRAND-SON.


IN MY OPINION...

...IF A MAN TALKS OF DREAMS AND AMBI-TIONS...
...HE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACHIEVE THEM HIMSELF... IN HIS OWN LIFETIME.

IT'S ABSURD TO PASS THEM ON TO AN HEIR.
A MAN SHOULD REALIZE... WHEN HIS DREAMS ARE JUST TOO BIG.

UH-HUHN...
YEAH... YOU'RE *RIGHT*.
YOU SAY *GOOD THINGS*.
ONLY...
...IF A CHILD *MUST* HONOR INHERITED AMBI-TIONS...
...WHAT CAN HE DO BUT POUR HIS *SOUL* INTO THE CHASE?
NOT SAYING "NO" WHILE HE STILL CAN.
NOT QUESTION-ING GOOD OR *EVIL*...
...OR... HIS OWN ABILITY.
NOT THINKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ONCE HE ACHIEVES HIS GOAL... OR IF HE *CAN'T*.
CHARGING BLINDLY AHEAD. HIS LIFE A *HAZE*.

SUCH IS THE POWER OF THE BOND BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD.
A POWER THAT SHOULD BE USED WISELY.
DON'T BE A FOOL AND IMPOSE YOUR DREAMS ON AN HEIR...
...BUT MAKE YOURSELF... EXCEP-TIONAL...
FIRST, ACHIEVE SOMETHING YOURSELF.
...IN A TANGIBLE OR INTANGIBLE WAY.
MAYBE THEN, AND ONLY THEN, YOU CAN THINK ABOUT WHO SHOULD CARRY IT ON.

...EH HEH HEH.
AHH HAH HAH! I GET IT. YOUNG SIR, YOU GOTTA BE FROM SOME...
...SPLENDID FAMILY.
YOU JEST. I'M JUST A KACHI...
...DOWN ON HIS LUCK.

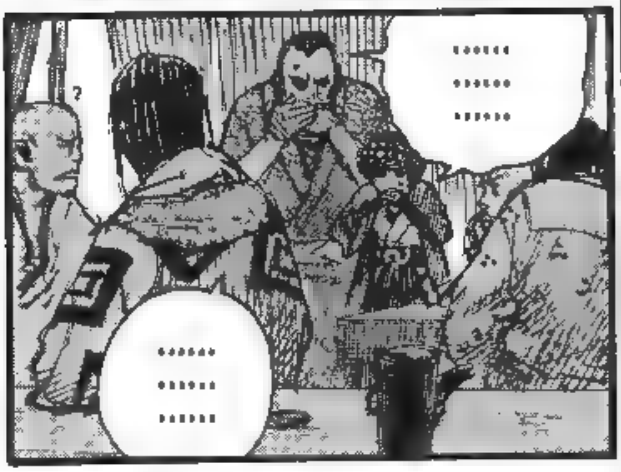
AHH... AH... HIC!
SOME-HOW, TODAY...
...THE SAKE WAS GREAT. HEH HEH!
WONDER IF... HIC ...WE'LL MEET AGAIN?
IF OUR FATES ENTWINE.
NYAHH HAH HAH HAH!
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN! YOU REALLY ARE!

TWO STORE-HOUSES. TWO...
IT'S GOTTA BE TH-THIS PLACE.
HAH? WAIT!
URRGF! -HIC!-

URRP!
YESTER-
DAY...
OUR
CONTACT'S
GOTTA--
WOW...
EEYUCK!
WHAT
A STINKING
DIVE!
OOF!

ISAKU.
DŌA.
OVER HERE.

TŌSHU ?!
T-TO--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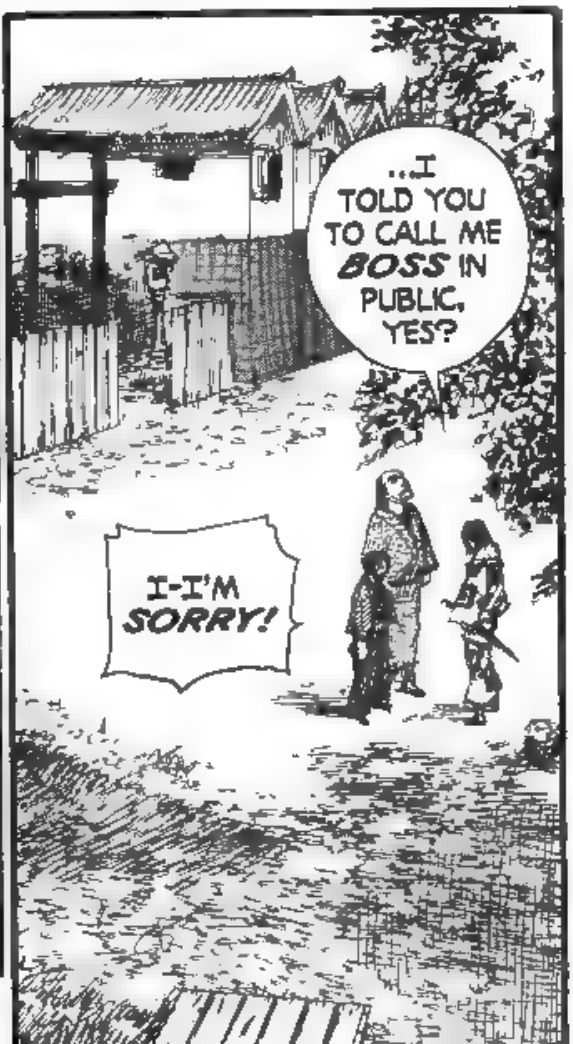
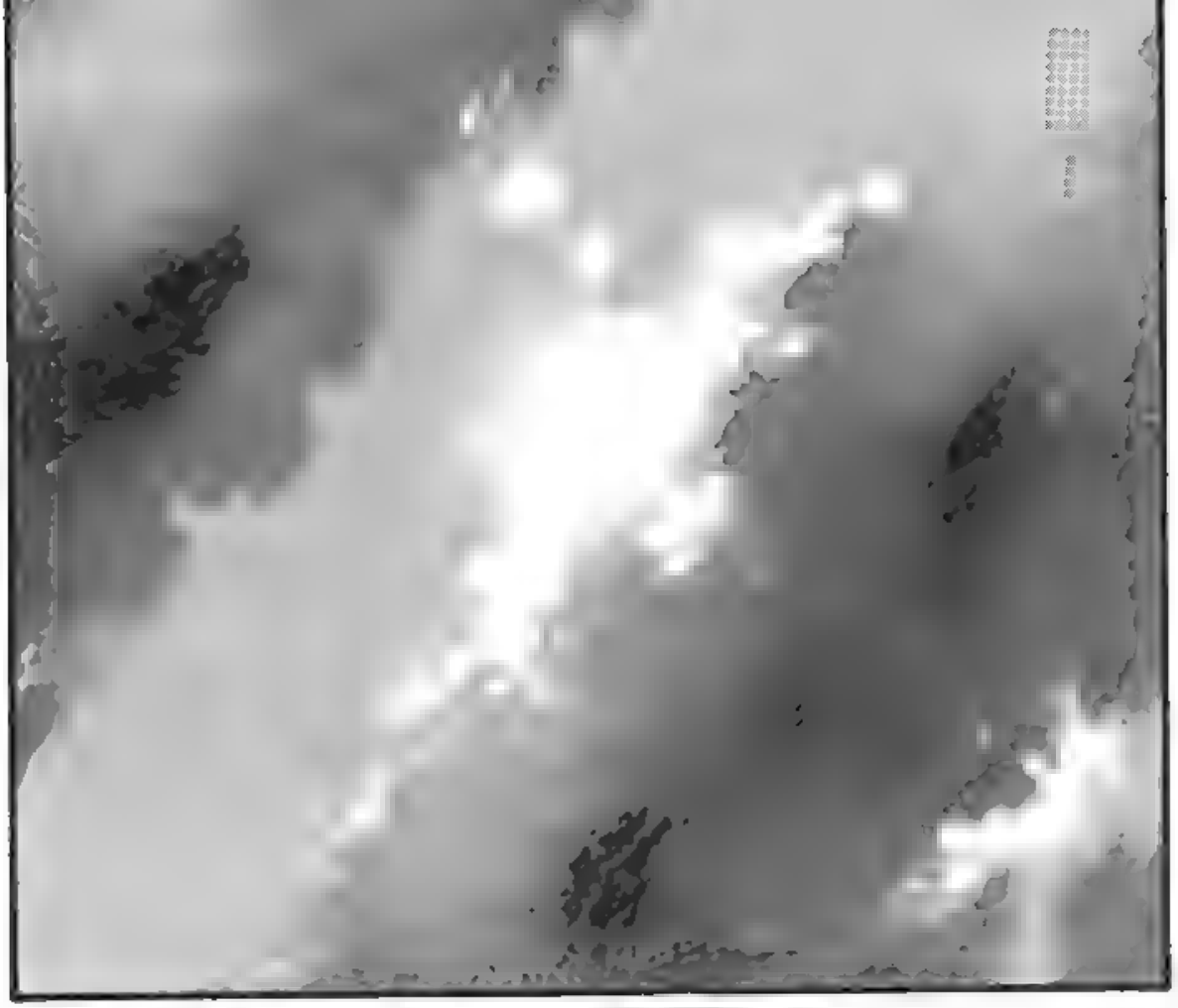

..I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME BOSS IN PUBLIC, YES?
I-I'M SORRY!

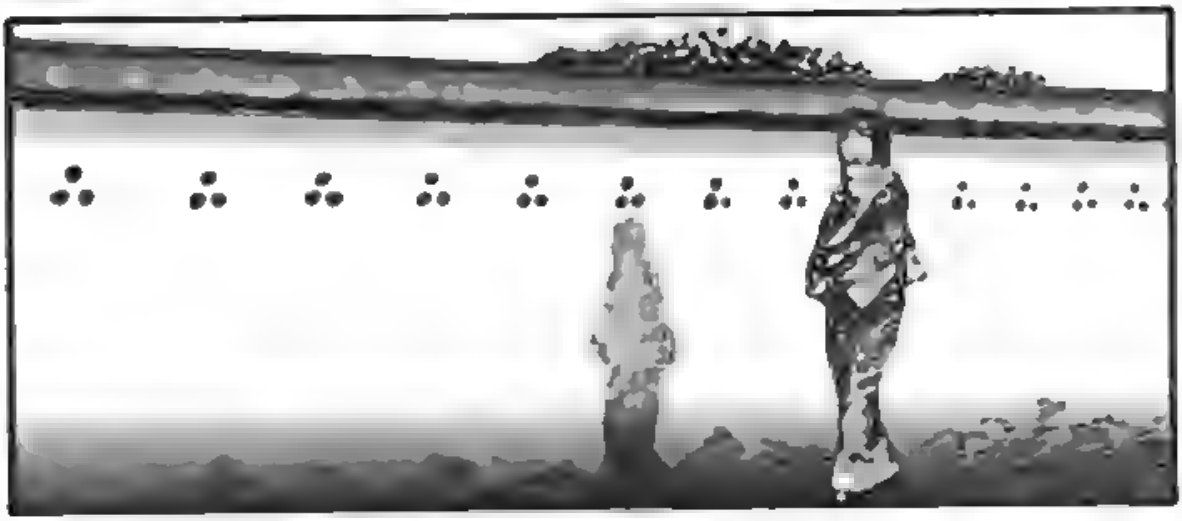
NO DOUBT YOU'VE NOTICED. THE POLICE HAVE BEEN OUT IN FULL FORCE...
...THIS PAST MONTH.
I THOUGHT IT LESS RISKY IF WE MET BY DAY.
IF THEY SAW US RENDEZVOUS AT NIGHT, THEY MIGHT ARREST US.
WATCH IT, YOU TWO! YOU'RE ALREADY WANTED.
GET IN ANY MORE TROUBLE, AND IT'S OVER. ENGRAVE THAT IN YOUR HEARTS!
WELL... ENOUGH.
DŌA. I HEAR YOU'RE GOING BY "YOSHINO"...?
YES, SIR!
I GOT THE NAME FROM THE HONCHŌ SUIKODEN THE TOSH--THE "BOSS" GAVE ME.
I PERCEIVE IN ITS IMPLICIT PATRIOTISM AN ECHO OF THE ITTŌ-RYŪ.
HOH! YOU SURPRISE ME.

I GAVE IT TO YOU SO YOU'D LEARN MORE KANJI FOR LIFE HERE IN EDO...
...BUT I FEARED IT WAS A TRIFLE DIFFICULT.
YET YOU READ IT THROUGH. I'M DELIGHTED.
ISAKU. GIVE THIS TO KASHIN KOJI.
WE'LL MEET AGAIN IN A MONTH.
EHH?! YOU'RE LEAVING AL-READY?
YES.

ISAKU. DŌA. WE RETURN TO BATTLE WHEN THE COLD RETURNS. THAT SHOULD PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS.
TRAIN... SO YOU DON'T GET RUSTY.
YES, SIR!

OH... MY... GAWWD...
THE TŌSHU IS SO... COOL!
TRAIN?!
DŌA...?
YOU BET I WILL!!
JUST WATCH ME!!
YOU ONLY LOOKED AT THAT BOOK THE DAY THE TŌSHU GAVE IT TO YOU.
YOU'VE BEEN READING AKABON EVER SINCE.
JUST LAY OFF! I'LL START IT NOW!
IT'S SO HARD, WITH ALL WORDS AND NO PIC...





OH?

WH-
WHERE
WERE
YOU LAST
NIGHT?
OH,
LOOKING
FOR *HIM.*
LIKE
ALWAYS...
WE WERE
W-WORRIED.
THERE'S
BEEN ALL
THAT...
THAT...
THANK
YOU,
BUT I'M
NOT DOING
ANYTHING
I'D GET
ARRESTED
FOR.
MAYBE
YOU
TWO
HAVE
SOME
LEADS?
JUST
JOKING.
N-
NO...
NOT
US...

OH! RIGHT!
WONDER IF WE SHOULDA TOLD HIM...?
TOLD HIM WHAT?
YOU KNOW... OUR RUN-IN WITH THE DŌSHIN.
HUH? WHY? IT'S NOT LIKE WE'LL EVER SEE 'EM AGAIN.
BE-SIDES...
YOU MEN SEARCH OVER THERE!
YES, SIR!
...HE'S GOT ENOUGH WORRIES.
I G-GUESS SO.
?

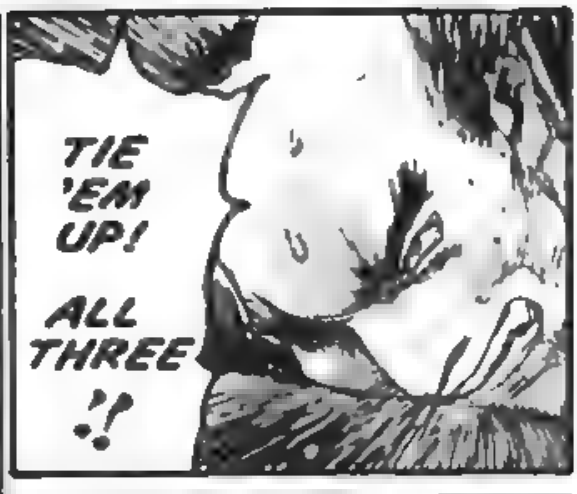
?!
AH?!
WHAT THE--
?!
.....
.....
ME--
ME--
MENNIN!!
IT'S THEM!

HWS!
DŌA!
DWW! WHY'RE YOU--?!
HOHH! MISCRE-ANTS!

UH, UH, IF...IT'S ABOUT THE OTHER DAY...
TOLD--
HAH HAH! HAH! YOU BLOCK-HEAD!!
EXCUSES DON'T WORK ON NAKIZŌ OF THE SUMIDA!
IN OTHER WORDS... ARE YOU STUPID?! YOU THINK YOU CAN DRAW SWORDS ON THE HATCHŌ-BORI?!
AND LOOK! YOUR LITTLE GIRL'S DONE IT TWICE! TWICE!

IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS HER GUARDIAN.
I, UH, I'M...NOT HER G-GUAR--
SHUT UP, AND YOU'RE COMING ALONG, TOO--
ONE! TWO!
THREE!
GRUH!
ZOUUOOSH!

BOSS!!
NAKIZŌ-SAN!
ISAKU! ARM UP!
JUST LOOK AT THEIR EYES! THEY'RE OUT FOR A FIGHT!



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ANOTSU

The leader of the Itō-ryū sword school targeted by the Mugai-ryū.

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Powerful daimyō and former head of the disbanded Mugai-ryū.

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Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Itō-ryū.

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Go-Rojū: Senior councilors to the shogun, picked from the most trusted feudal lords.

Go-yo: Literally, "official business," but in practice, this was the police command to miscreants ordering them to surrender to authorities. Police posses carried go-yō lanterns as well.

Hatchobori: A district in Edo, and, in this case, slang for the police constables who patrol that area.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Jitte: A specialized weapon carried by street cops. It's about eighteen inches long, with no cutting edge—just two prongs designed to catch and snap off an opponent's sword blade.

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Mutenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Obi: The broad fabric band used to close kimono and other traditional dress.

Okappiki: An Edo-era policeman who was nevertheless a commoner (and sometimes a former criminal) and could not carry a sword.

Ryu: A sword school.

Shitappiki: Another name for a lower-class Edo-era policeman. As commoners, they could not carry a sword.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Page 6: When Dōa asks, "Where re your stupid *lanterns*, you show-offs?!" she is referring to the *go-yo* lanterns that Edo-era police often carried at night.

Page 20: Kobayashi hesitates to take his superior's sword, this is because the *okappiki* and *shitappiki* were not samurai caste and were not usually allowed to carry swords.

Page 21: *Karami*, *sasumata*, and *uchikomi* are a variety of non-lethal weapons designed to pin down and immobilize a criminal. The hand-held *jitte* was designed to trap and snap sword blades.

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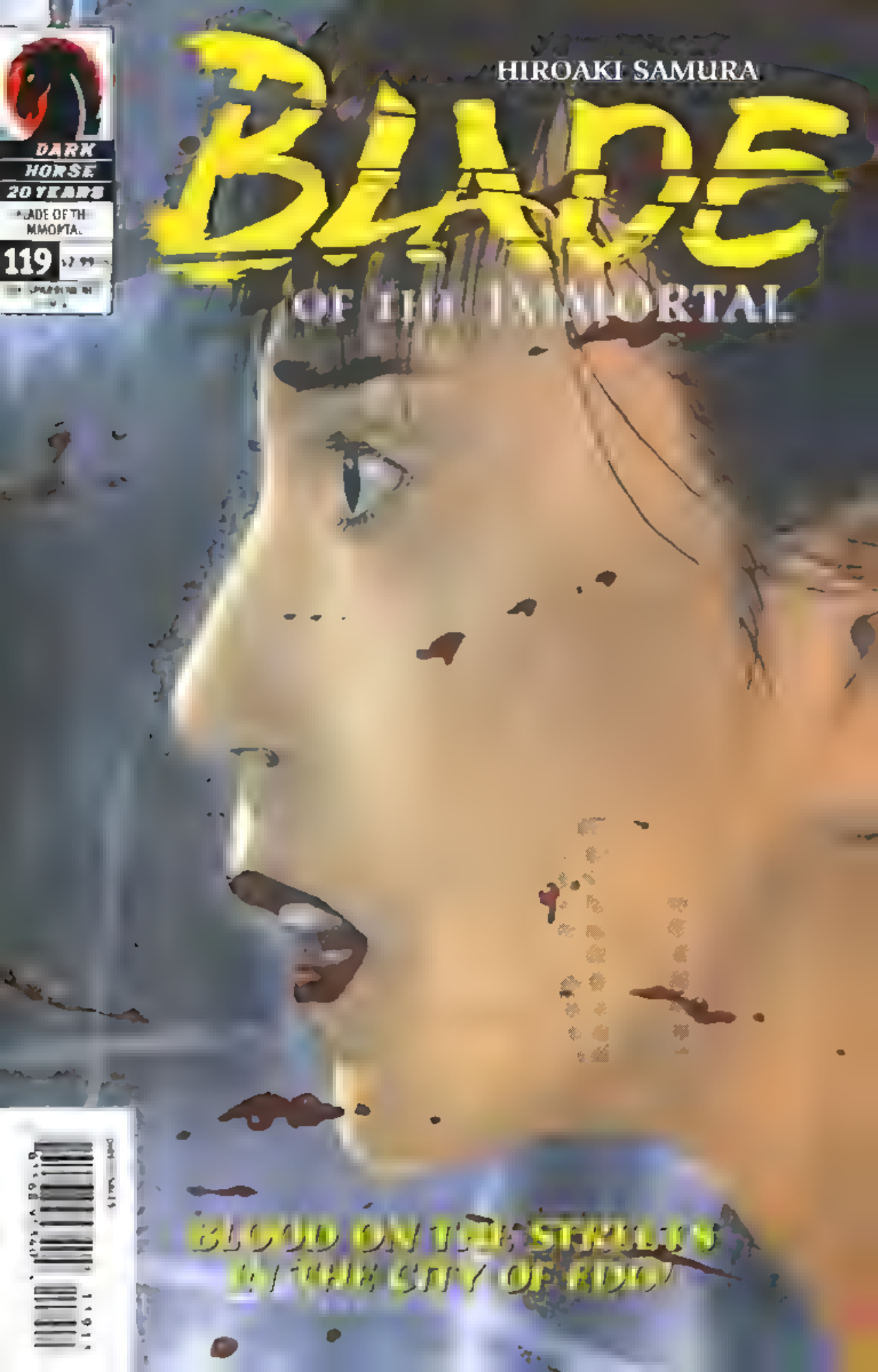
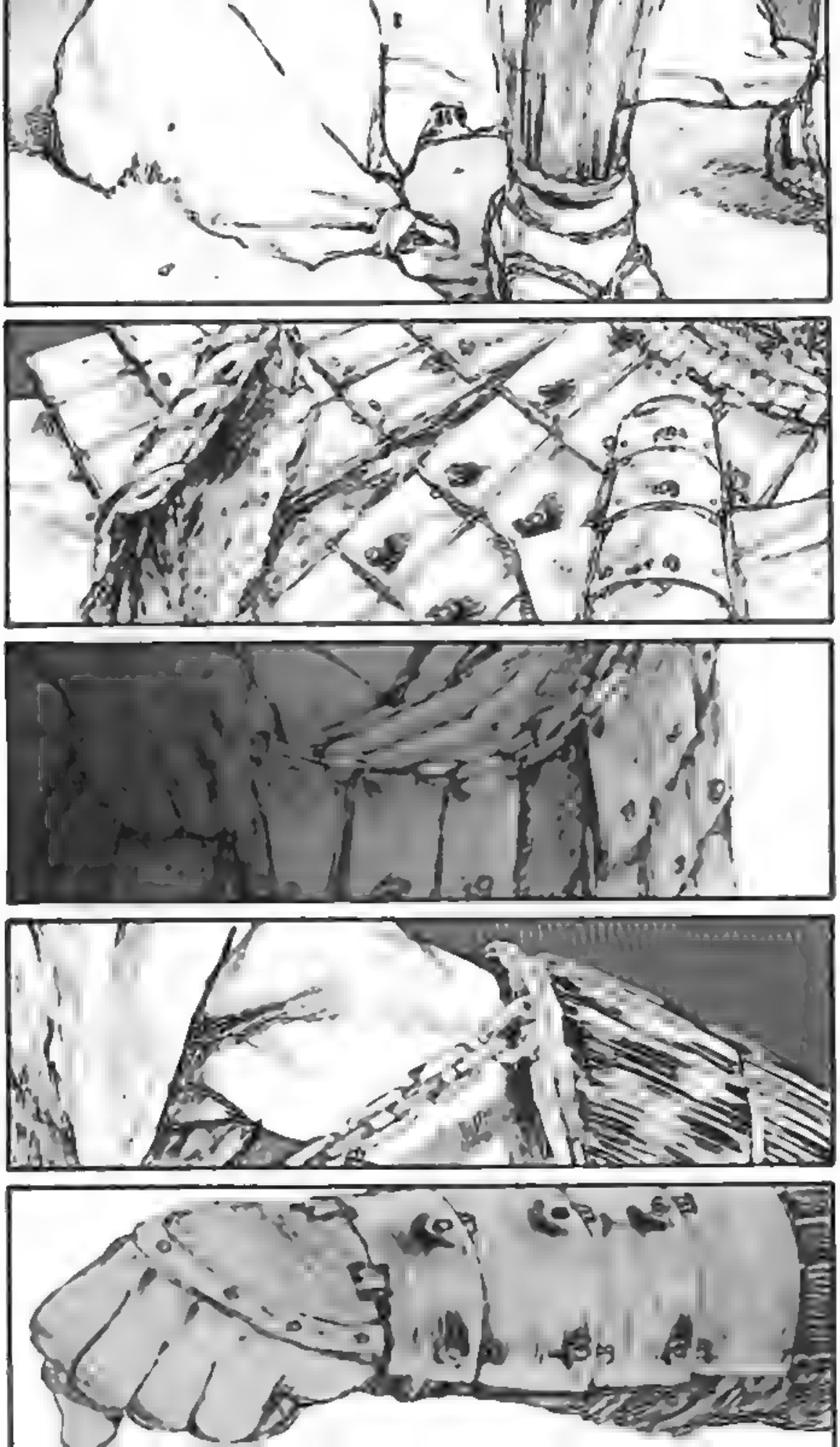

DARK HORSE
20 YEARS
119
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
BLOOD ON THE STREETS
IN THE CITY OF EDO!

無限の住人

THE SPARROW NET

-part two-



GO-YŌ!
GO-YŌ!
GO-YŌ!
GO-YŌ!
GO-YŌ!

WHERE'RE YOUR STUPID LANTERNS, YOU SHOWOFFS?!
WANNA-BES!
ISAKU! STOP DŌA!
SHE'S DRAWN, BUT WE CAN TALK OUR WAY OUT.
IF SHE HURTS A HATCHŌ-BORI, IT'S DEATH ROW!
...RIN-SAN.

TH-THANKS FOR WORRYING... BUT...
...IT'S ALL THE SAME.
?
THE SAME...?
YOU BITCH!
A GUY ONLY GETS TWO OF 'EM!
SURROUND 'EM!!

!
THUD!
UNF!
SPLASH

GO PEACE-FULLY OR.. OR...
...RESIST... AND PAY UNTIL WE DRAGGED YOU IN.
DAMN YOU... UNTIL NOW...
...YOU BASTARDS HAD A CHOICE.
NO CHOICE NOW... FUCKERS!
BUT... THAT'S HISTORY!
ISAKU!

KA-KA
KUNK
?!
DID YOU JUST--?
AH!

BEHIND YOU!
HUH? WHO?!
FUCK!
FUCK!

KYNG!
KYNG!
KYNG!
.....
.....!

LEGGO, YOU--!!
D-DAMMIT !!

OVER THERE!
GYAH!!
WHERE IS SHE?!

AHH-
RAHH...!
"PUT UP OUR HANDS FIRST?
"NOPE!
"WE'VE KILLED PEOPLE!
"FIVE... NO, MORE."
SHHIIT!
YAIEE!
AH...?!
S-
SORRY!

KI-CHI!!
.....
.....
.....

Whhf
"...DŌA.
"YOU SHALL NEVER AGAIN KILL TO STEAL.

"HAVING PASSED THROUGH ITTŌ-RYŪ'S GATE...
"...YOU MAY WIELD YOUR BLADE FOR BUT THREE REASONS.
"ONE, WHEN YOUR PRINCIPLES ARE THREATENED.
"TWO, WHEN ONE IMPORTANT TO YOU IS IN DANGER.
"THREE, WHEN YOUR OWN LIFE IS AT STAKE."
RIGHT. I'M IN THE CLEAR...
KO-BAYASHI... USE THIS.
EH?! BUT...
IS IT REALLY... OKAY?
IT'S FINE. I'LL OVERLOOK IT.

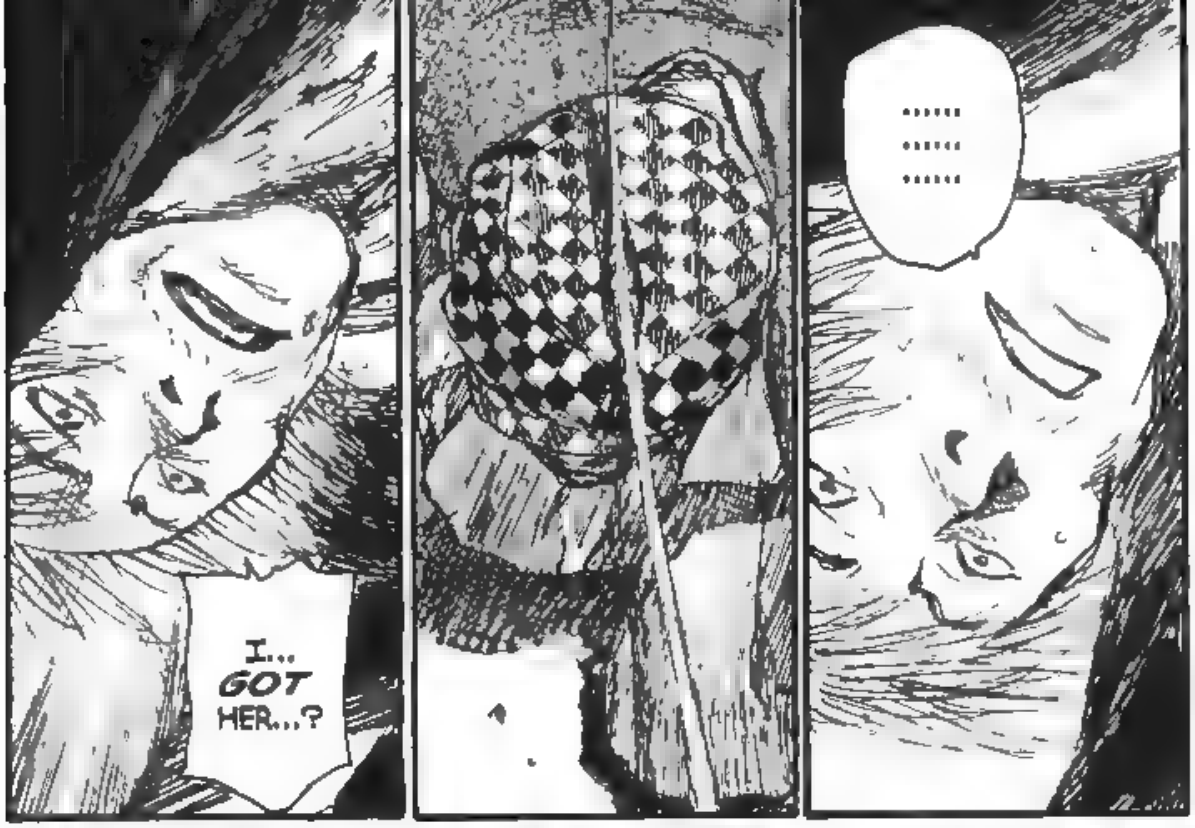
AND IS THIS *THE TIME* FOR QUESTIONS?!
IF WE DON'T KILL 'EM, WE'RE--!
YOU GUYS, *TOO!* DUMP THE *KARAMI!* THE *SASUMATA.* THE *UCHIKOMI.*
USE YOUR *JITTE!* YOU CAN'T KEEP UP WITH HER WITH ANYTHING *LONGER.*

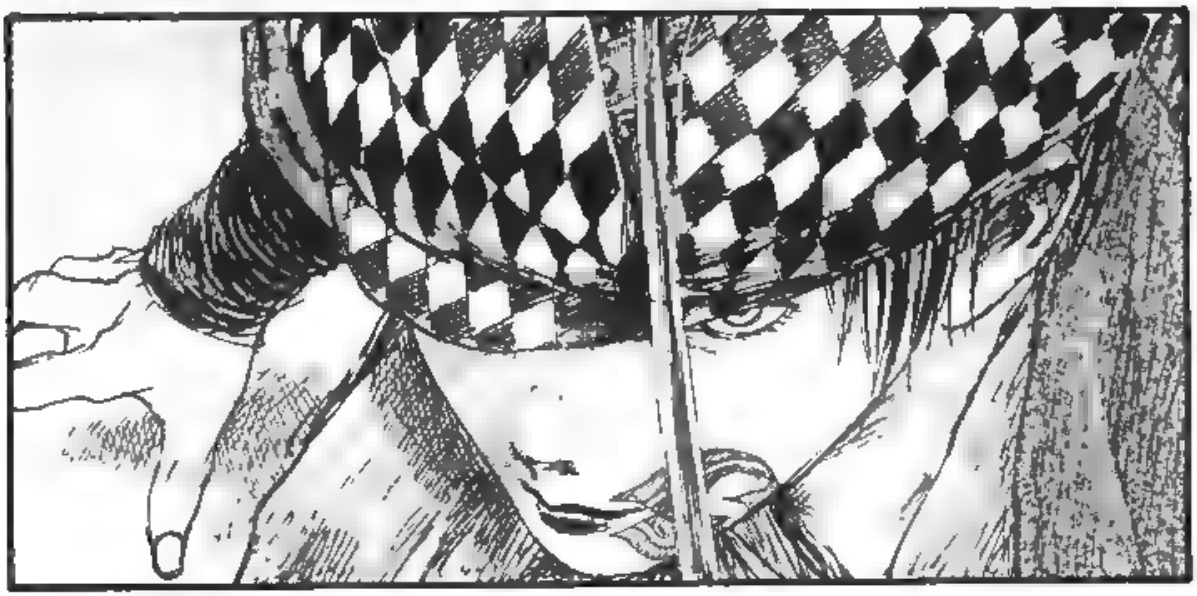
WHOA!
OUCH...

DAMN YOU! EVERY TIME!
GET OUT OF THE WAY! YOU LUMP ON A LOG!
SKRAAK
KS-HOK
SPASS!
HAH?
.....
.....
.....

FUCKIN'
KID...!

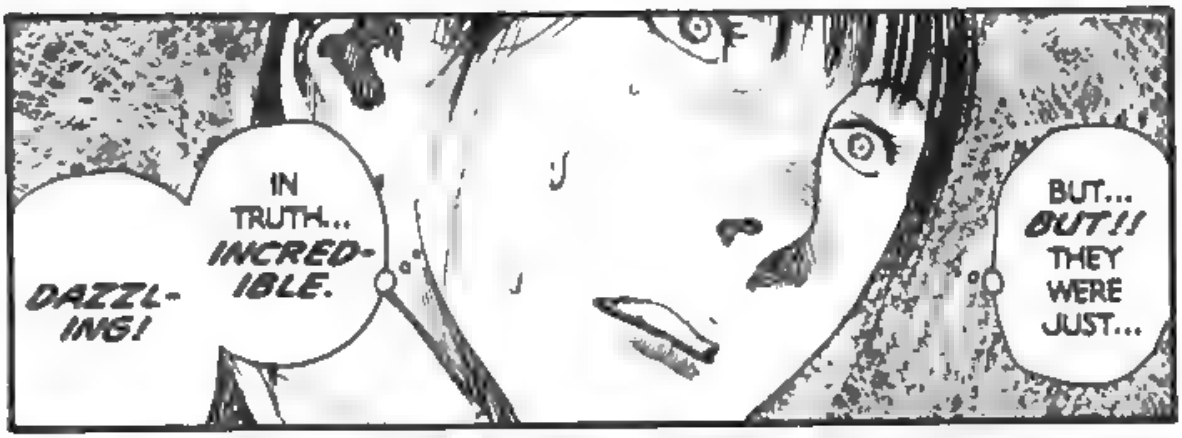
DŌA!!
DIE !!
JUST

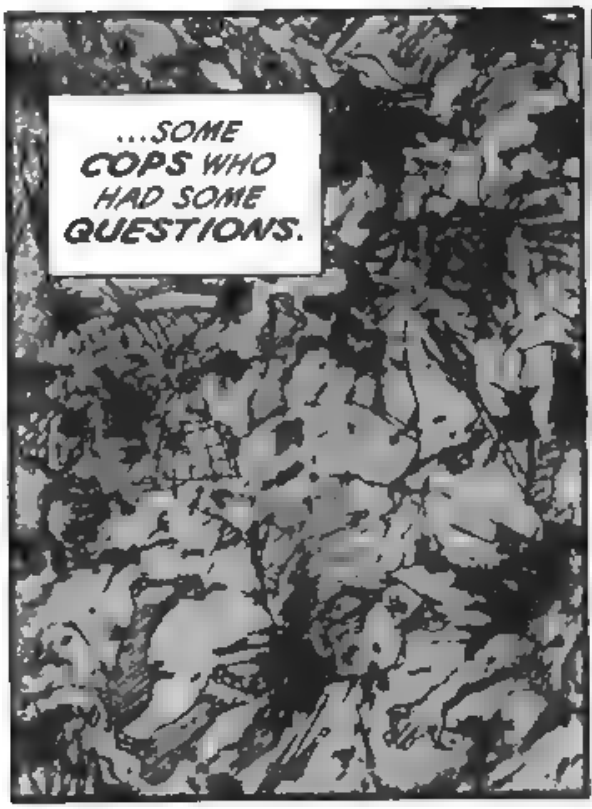

I...
GOT
HER...?
.....
.....
.....



THAT...
THAT'S...
...NOT...
...FAIR
!!

MY OBI CAME LOOSE...
.....! HEEK!
TEN MEN... IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE...
D-DŌA HE'S AL-READY...
EEP!
GYAH!
NO... AIEEE!!
.....
.....
.....


DAZZL-ING!
IN TRUTH... INCRED-IBLE.
BUT... BUT!! THEY WERE JUST...


...SOME COPS WHO HAD SOME QUESTIONS.

STRIKE FIRST? KILL EVERY-ONE?

HALT, HALT, HALT!!
DON'T MOVE, ANY OF YOU.
WHEN THAT'S ALL THEY WERE...?
Y-YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE THAT!

WE HEAR SCREAM-ING... AND WHEN WE COME TO CHECK...
...WE FIND CORPSES?! STREWN ON THE BANKS?!
AND YOU... THE MISCRE-ANTS?

TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art, story, and front cover by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**

lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *rōnin* vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenchi-ryū dōjō destroyed by the Itō-ryū.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful, *bangashira* serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality

DŌA

Dōa, an Itō-ryū warrior is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing their real connection

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Itō-ryū

BURANDO

Deranged medical examiner returned to prison by a disappointed Kagimura.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chū*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Burando, Kagimura's head medical examiner, fails to transfer the powers of the *kessen-chū* to another human, and he loses his grip on reality after too many prisoners die under his watch. After receiving a clue to Manji's whereabouts from Giichi, Rin rejoins Dōa and Isaku in the streets of Edo, only to have Dōa pick another fight with the local police.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**

editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshu*.

Bangoku: Barbarian countries. Also a general term for the West.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Daimyo: Ruler of a feudal fiefdom.

Dōjō: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts, here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank.

Doshin: Police constables from the lower ranks of the samurai caste, serving under *yoriki*, police "sergeants."

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Go-Roju: Senior councilors to the shogun, picked from the most trusted feudal lords.

Han: A feudal domain.

Hatamoto: The *hatamoto* were the most trusted of the shogun's followers. *Hatamoto daimyo* (feudal lords) were given the choicest and most strategic *han* fiefdoms after the Tokugawa unified the country.

Itto-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kaga: A remote feudal domain on the Japan Sea coast southwest of Edo.

Kanpō: Chinese-based medicine, relying heavily on medicinal plants.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Machi-bugyō: One of the top governing positions in Edo, a magistrate with the combined powers of mayor and chief of police. This position was held in monthly rotation by two senior Tokugawa vassals, who were in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law in Edo. Their rule extended only to commoners, as samurai in Edo were controlled by their own *daimyo* and his officers. The *machi-bugyō* had an administrative staff and a small force of armed policemen.

Mugai ryū: A group of criminals who worked as assassins for the shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets. Disbanded by Habaki Kagimura.

Mutenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Nanban: Literally, "Southern barbarian." Westerners were called this because their ships first reached Japan from the south and their manners were considered quite rude.

Ranpo: A word that can refer both specifically to Dutch medicine and generally to all of Western medicine.

Ryū: A sword school.

Shinbangata: Edo-era term, typical of a palace elder and meaning the same thing as *bangashira*. The *shinbangata* was the leader of the officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Shugoku: The warden of Kodenma Prison. For generations, the holder of this hereditary position adopted the name Ishida Tatewaki.

Shirasu: Both a court and interrogation chamber, where guilt was determined by whatever means necessary, including torture.

Taisei: Europe.

Ten: Doctor to the shogun and his ministers.

Wakadoshiyori: While the *go-roju* elders were the shogun's closest advisors, an advisory council of *wakadoshiyori* lords were the hands-on managers of the shogunate bureaucracy.

Yoriki: Mid-ranking samurai inspectors, equivalent to modern police lieutenants. *Yoriki* commanded the lower-ranked *doshin*.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

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120
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3 OF 4
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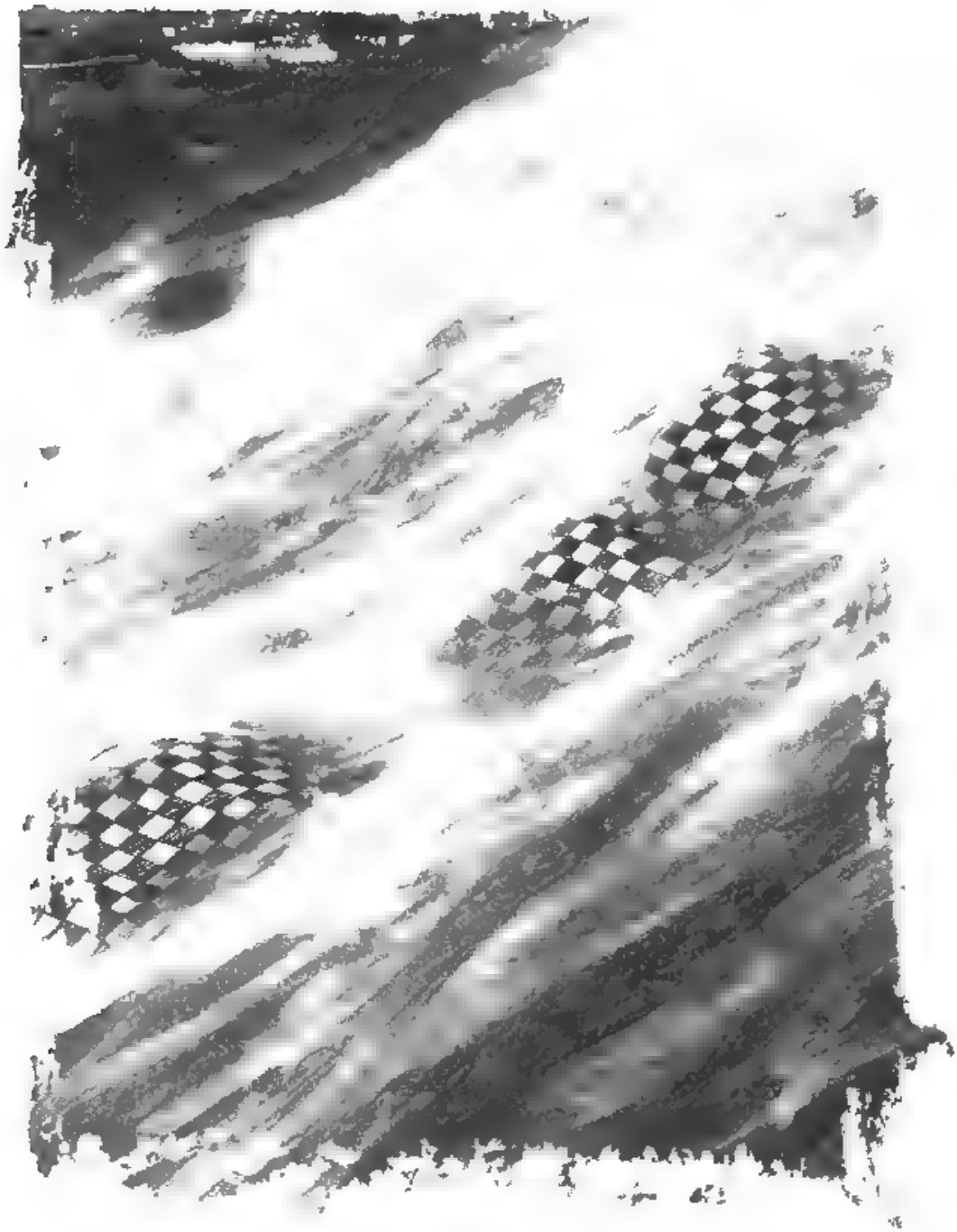
無限の住人



THE SPARROW NET

-part three-

ALL OF YOU!
SURREN-DER!

BAD... NOTHING BUT YORIKI...
...AND DŌ SHIN.
DŌA...!
YOU DON'T LET IT SHOW... BUT THE FATIGUE FROM THE FIGHT...
T- T-T- TO--
--TODOROKI-SAMA!!

HOH! NAKIZŌ, IS IT?
WHY ARE YOU WALKING LIKE THAT?
SIR! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME!
WHACK THESE VILLAINS! PLEASEEE!!
WE JUST MADE A BIG ARREST. WE WERE HEADING BACK, BUT...
NAKIZŌ. THOSE BODIES...
YOUR MEN, I PRESUME?
YES, SIR!
AND THOSE TWO DID IT, SIR! ESPECIAL-LY...
...THAT SHRIMP !!
THAT LITTLE MINX DID TEN OF MY MEN! AND..AND MY CROWN JEWELS!
YOU LET A GIRL KILL THEM? YOU IDIOT!!
AIEEEE! MERCY...!

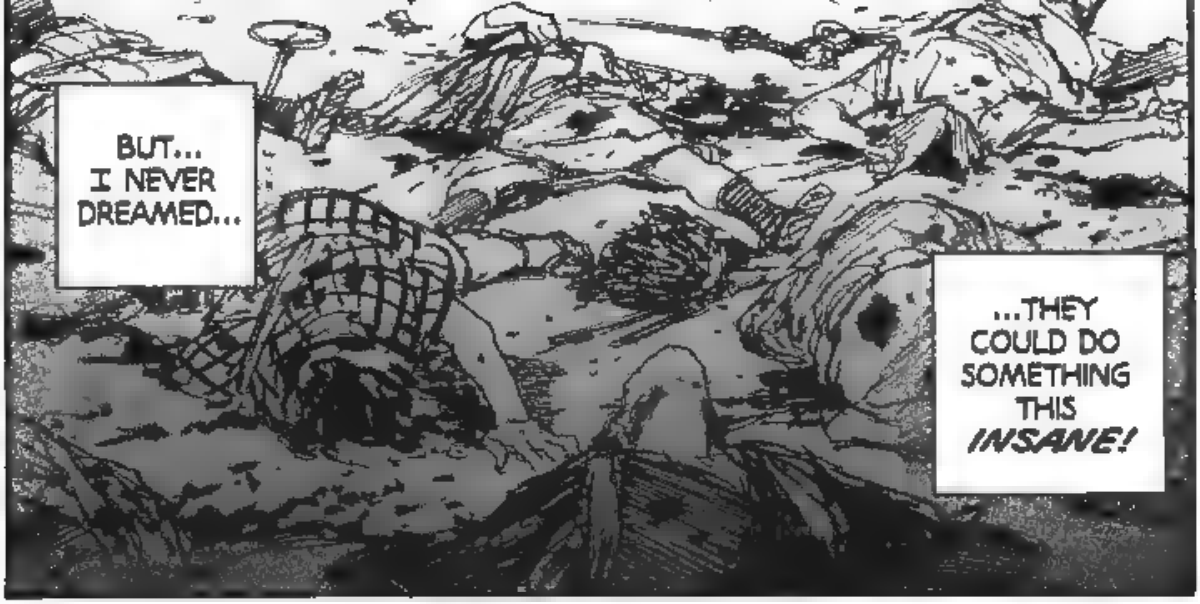
WAIT, NAKIZŌ.
WHAT DID *THIS* GIRL DO?
HUH?

THAT ONE? UHH...
...BASICALLY, SHE...STOOD THERE WITH HER MOUTH OPEN.

OH! BUT *BEFORE!* BEFORE, SHE WAS *CHATTERING AWAY WITH 'EM!*
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, SHE'S *ONE OF 'EM!*

I SEE... IT SEEMS WE'LL HAVE TO PUT THE ROPES ON YOU.
HMM?

NO--
--WAY!!
O-O-SAMURAI-SAMA. SHE JUST--
SILENCE! NO EXCUSES, MIS-CREANT!
SAVE IT FOR THE O-SHIRASU!
TAKE THAT!
YEAH!
FWAP FWAP
THEY THINK I'M ONE OF THEM...
...AND I GUESS, IN A WAY, I AM.


BUT... I NEVER DREAMED...
...THEY COULD DO SOMETHING THIS INSANE!

ARREST MEANS DEATH.
I KNOW THAT, BUT--

--BUT, DŌA, WHY...? IF THOSE GUYS WERE SO EASY TO BUTCH-ER...

...HOW HARD WOULD IT HAVE BEEN TO JUST SHAKE THEM?
ESPECIALLY... YOU?!

RIGHT! BRING THEM IN!

KCHK

...DŌA...

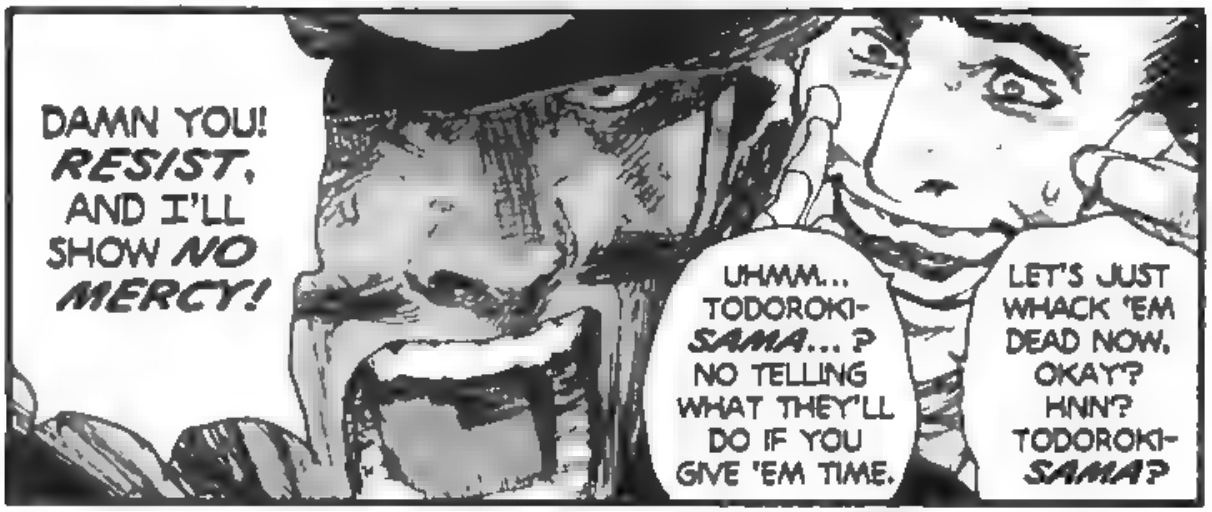
...GROSS!
I DON'T WANT TO BE TAKEN...!

JUST YESTER-DAY, I FINALLY GOT A LEAD ON MANJI...
...AND TO HAVE IT END...? HERE?
YO, GIRL--
SPLAK!
HEY! STOP THAT!
LET ME GOOO !!
YOU IDIOT! DON'T FIGHT IT!
AH...?

HALT!
WHOA...!

SHPAAAA!!
.....
.....
.....
AH!
D-
DON'T...
STOP!
EH?
OH...
HEEEE!
SHRAK!

HAH! GOT YA!!
TOLD YOU IT WAS HOPELESS, MISSY!
OWW! YAIEE!!
THUKK
NGNG!
KRAKK
HEY!
THUNK
YOU!
ISAKU !!


DAMN YOU! *RESIST*, AND I'LL SHOW *NO MERCY!*
UHMM... TODOROKI-*SAMA*...? NO TELLING WHAT THEY'LL DO IF YOU GIVE 'EM TIME.
LET'S JUST WHACK 'EM DEAD NOW, OKAY? HNN? TODOROKI-*SAMA*?

SKAROW!
SHUT! UP!!

RIN-*SAN*. LOOK AFTER DŌA.
PAR-DON?

EH?
WAI--!
WHAT ARE--?!
KYUNGN!!

KABLOOM!

HOW...?
HOW DARE YOU?!
FISH THEM OUT!
DON'T LET THEM...
...ESCA--?!
GYA!
YOU FOOL! LET GO OF--

TODOROKI-
SAMA!!

Y-YOU
FUCKIN'--
!!
HYAH!
NURG!

FOOOF!
ISAKU...!

¿Qué es?

AH-HAH! HERE IT IS.
FEAST YOUR EYES! THOSE HOLLOW CHEEKS!
YAH HAH HAH!
THAT PECULIAR HAIR. MAL-NUTRITION, EH?

POOR BOY. YOUR PRECIOUS PATRON WOULD JUST HAVE TO BE...
...HABAKI KAGIMURA-DONO...
TAN
DAMN YOU!
HOW DARE A MERE TENI SPEAK THAT WAY OF A HATA-MOTO!
IDIOT! HEAR THESE WORDS! FROM THE MOUTH OF A GO-RŌJŪ!
"A SHIN-BANGATA WITHOUT SPEAR OR SOLDIERS? NOT EVEN IN THE CASTLE? TROUBLE-MAKER!
"WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, SWEET-TALKING THE WAKADOSHIYORI TO TAKE FELONS FROM KODENMA PRISON AT WILL?
"IMPOSSIBLE TO READ... AND A ROYAL HEADACHE!" THAT'S WHAT HE SAID!

SILENCE! THE GO-RŌJŪ DON'T UNDERSTAND!
THEY DON'T SEE HOW MUCH OF WHAT HABAKI-DONO STRIVES TO DO HE DOES FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE-- INDEED, THE NATION!

HOW CAN MEN LIKE YOU JUDGE--

ALL DONE FOR THE PEOPLE, IS IT?
AND THAT'S WHY HE TREATS THE PEOPLE'S LIVES LIKE NOTHING?

THEY SAY THE MACHI-BUGYŌ AND SHŪGOKU ARE AT WITS' END.
THEY TRANSFER CONVICTS TO HABAKI-DONO AS THEY'RE TOLD...BUT NOT A ONE RETURNS.

YOU WIT-LESS FOOL!
THE WHOLE CASTLE KNOWS OF YOUR PERVERT-ED STUNTS!

YOU LET YOURSELVES GET TALKED INTO KILLING PRISONERS WITH UNHEARD CASES!
YOU SCUM ARE NO DOCTORS! HAVE YOU NO SHAME?!
THAT... THAT'S...
...TORTURED ME. IT HAS! OFTEN...
BUT... BUT WHAT COULD I DO...?
FOR ONE MAN'S LIFE TODAY... FOR HIS SACRIFICE... SOON... SOON...
...WE MAY BE ABLE TO SAVE SO MANY MORE! FACED WITH THAT PROSPECT...?
RIGHT?! IF YOU TRULY ARE A DOCTOR, SURELY YOU--
I DO NOT!! LISTEN WELL, BOY... AND YOU REMEMBER!

KOSHO-GAKU!
KIN-GEI IGAKU!
KOIHŌ!
IN ALL OF OUR MEDICINAL TRADITIONS, NO TRUTH CAN BE FOUND BY CARVING A LIVING PATIENT'S FLESH!
NONE!

IT'S YOUR BLIND FAITH IN RANPŌ THAT TORTURES YOU!
AND SO! WHAT HAVE YOU TO SHOW FOR REJECTING US? A MOUNTAIN OF CORPSES! THIS IS WHAT YOUR BANGOKU TAUGHT YOU?!

NOW, NOW, DOCTOR MORI... MAYBE THAT'S SO... BUT IT WAS HIS NANBAN MEDI-CINE...
...THAT CAUGHT HABAKI-DONO'S EYE, MM?

CAN YOU BLAME THE POOR LAD FOR CLINGING TO HIS ONLY WEAPON, EVEN WHEN HE KNOWS IT'S USELESS?
CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO CHASTISE HIM, NOT ME. MMM.

HIT IT ON THE NOSE!
ARGH!
BUHA HAH HAH HAH!
YOU OLD SOFTIE, DOCTOR KURE!

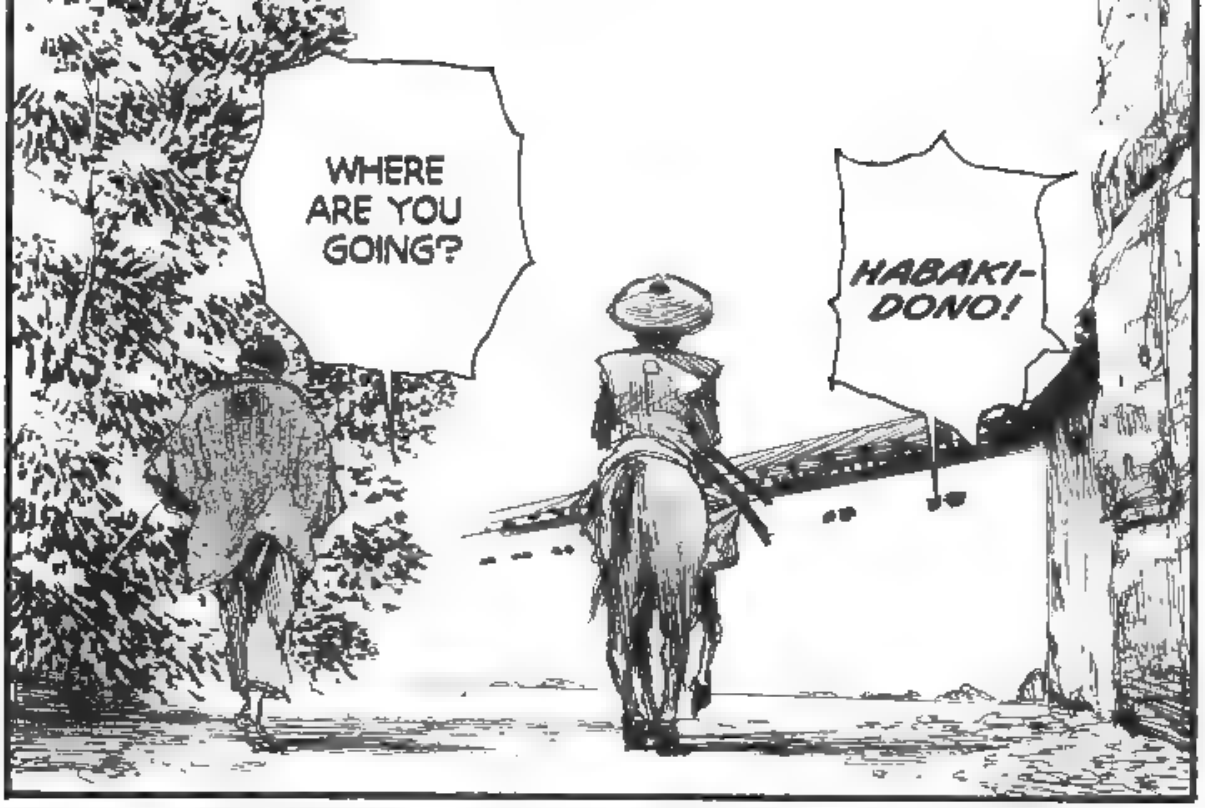
BUT HAVE YOU *HEARD?*
JUST WHAT HIS GORY RESEARCH IS *ABOUT?*
AHH... INDEED...
WHAT *WAS* IT...? IMMORTALITY? ETERNAL *YOUTH?* OR *BOTH?*
IT'S GOOD TO *DREAM!* WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, MAYBE SOME *ETERNAL VIRILITY*, MM?
BUWAH HAH HAH! OH, DOCTOR KURE! YOU *CARD!*
THIS ISN'T A *JOKE!* IT'S *REAL! REA--!!*
SHUT UP, YOU *MOUNTE-BANK!* LYING YOUR WAY TO THE TOP!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
HABAKI-*DONO'S* SEARCHING HIGH AND LOW FOR A DOCTOR TO CLEAN UP YOUR MESS!
SOONER OR LATER, I IMAGINE HE'LL COME TO *US.*
BUT DON'T WORRY, I SHAN'T *ANSWER.* I'LL JUST OFFER SOME ADVICE.

"OPEN YOUR EYES, HABAKI-DONO!"
I'LL DRAG YOU OUT FROM BEHIND YOUR SHIELD, DOG!
SOMEONE ELSE... BESIDES ME...?
TO DO MY SURGERY?
THAT... THAT'S INSANE...
...STINKING CREATURE THROUGH THE CASTLE GATES... MY LAND...
OUR LORDS ARE TOO GENEROUS. LETTING THAT...

IS THERE ANYTHING MORE INSANE?!
THNK
I INVENTED IT, YOU KANPŌ QUACKS! YOU AREN'T UP TO IT!
SQUATTING ON YOUR ASSES! JUST STROLLING...
...ALONG THE PATH YOUR PREDECESSORS MADE?!
HAVE YOU EVER USED YOUR OWN BRAINS TO THINK OF ANYTHING?!
HAVE YOU GIVEN ONE IOTA OF THE THOUGHT TO MEDICINE THAT I HAVE?
I THINK NOT!!

HABAKI-DONO!!
I'M HERE! AYAME BURANDO!!
HABAKI-DONO! TERRIBLE NEWS!
SCOUN-DRELS ARE SPREADING RUMORS IN THE CASTLE!
SAY SOME-THING TO THOSE TWO!
PLEASE !!

HM?
...IS IT ALL RIGHT, SIR?
HE'S BEEN SHOUTING...
SLAP THEM DOWN! RIGHT?! HABAKI-DONO!!
AHH.
I'M DONE WITH HIM.
NOW, ABOUT THOSE DOCTORS. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
YES, SIR. WHATEVER IT TAKES.
?!
HUH ?!
WHA--?! WAIT!


WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
HABAKI-DONO!

ONLY ONE DOCTOR IN THIS LAND CAN DELIVER!
JUST ONE!
AYAME BURANDO!

IT'S TRUE! I KNOW IT!
HABAKI-DONOOO!!
TO BE CONTINUED.../

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
front cover colors by **DAN JACKSON**

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RIN

A student of the Mugai-ryū vowed to avenge the destruction of her village by the Itō-ryū.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira* serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

Dōa, an Itō-ryū warrior, is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing the Yurea connection.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Itō-ryū.

BURANDO

Deranged medical examiner turned [illegible] by a disappointed Kagimura.

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Infected by *kessen chū*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's immortality experiments. Burando, Kagimura's head medical examiner, fails to transfer the powers of the *kessen chū* to another human and loses his grip on reality. After receiving a clue to Manji's whereabouts, Rin rejoins Dōa and Isaku in the streets of Edo only to have Dōa pick another battle with the local police. Seeing no other alternative, Isaku throws Dōa and Rin into a river where the swift current takes them away from the street fight.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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[illegible]

Dear fellow *BOTI* viewers

Jhomar Soriano's switching to a lighter style in issue #5's "Rumble to Kaga" was to good effect, in a smart merging of story elements. It's so enjoyable that he's coming up with these new pages. Pay him 100 bushels of rice per month for a regular monthly gig, Philip! And then what about Hipp's back cover take on Mayor? I think he accurately caught the N.H.S. (Natural Huggable Sweetness) of our man. Does everyone else think as I do that this Samura guy is an artist to watch? Yep, thought so. Cheers everyone! Chilled pony-bottles of saki dc for the house. No—I swear, it's better than the hi-ca.

Also, does the prison arc get into the exchanging of animal and human body parts? You know, it's a crazy grapevine out here, especially after having seen *Pirates of the Caribbean 2*.

Jamie Limsattd
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jamie, you're one of my favorite *Blade* correspondents. You deserve a *kessen-chu* prize! (Got worms?) Keep it kooky—and write again soon. Our favorite parody artist, Mr. Jhomar Soriano, will be showing up again in a few months with another comic strip offering. What did you think of his new parody arc, "On the Evils Under Edo," which debuted last issue? Cool cat Dan Hipp (who draws *The Amazing Joy Buzzards*) will be contributing a color pinup for *next issue's* back cover, so you'll get another Hipp fix in thirty days!

Back cover illustration by John O'Neill from Santurce, Puerto Rico. Mr. O'Neill says, "I'm so sorry that Dewanosuke had to die! Oh, well.... Manji will make 'em pay, right? He'd better. I already hate those bastards! In the meantime, here is a drawing dedicated to Dewanosuke's memory." We miss Dewa, too! Thanks for sending in this creepy piece of found art." John'

Philip Simon

NEXT MONTH

Separated from Isaku and Manji, Dōa and Rin begin to lean on each other for support, with neither of them knowing that they're actually on opposing sides of a complex, generations-long conflict. As Edo's most esteemed doctors mull over Kagimura's experiments and Manji's mystical, regenerative bloodworms, Rin starts spying on Edo Castle and Kagimura's comings and goings. She just needs one big clue to get her rescue operation rolling. The Edo Castle stakeout commences with "Barefoot," part one of five!

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Dōa uses the Edo Period pronunciations of "Christian" and "crucifix" in this issue. These are different from contemporary Japanese pronunciations, so Samura is deliberately evoking a period feel by using "Kirishitan" and "kurusu."

—After watching missionaries lay the groundwork for the colonization of the Philippines and other neighboring corners of Asia, Tokugawa Ieyasu formerly banned Christianity in 1614, deporting missionaries and killing Christians who refused to renounce their faith. Revolts by Christian believers were brutally suppressed, and surviving believers went underground, concealing crucifixes and other signs of their faith from the authorities. In a remote corner of distant Hokka dō, Isaku's father appears to have escaped the brutal repression.

Asaemon uses Kagimura's first name and says "young Habaki," clearly indicating his higher status in Edo society than Kagimura, based on age and, very likely, trust in the eyes of the shogunate. Kagimura takes this condescending tone in stride.

GLOSSARY

Ainu: Natives of the Japanese archipelago were driven north by today's modern Japanese population, now found only on the northern island of Hokkaidō.

Bangashira: Head of the *banshu*.

Banshu: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Basho Ukeoinin: Under the Tokugawa, Hokkaidō was nominally managed by the feudal fiefdom of Matsumae Han. *Basho Ukeoinin* were traders licensed to deal with the *Ainu* on the Han's behalf.

Bateren: A corruption of the word "padre" for the Portuguese priests that first arrived in Japan in the sixteenth century.

Dojo: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts, here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Han: A feudal domain.

Itto-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Janta: The *Ainu* were part of the Okhotsk culture zone of aboriginal peoples living around the southern half of the Sea of Okhotsk, with similar languages and material culture. Living on what's today Russian Sakhalin as well as on Hokkaidō, the *Ainu* traded with aboriginal peoples in the delta of the mighty Amur River emptying into the Sea of Okhotsk, today part of the borderline between China and Russia. Dōa identifies the "Janta spear" as belonging to one of these Amur tribes.

Found *Ohikkoshi* yet? If you're a fan of Hiroaki Samura and his *Blade of the Immortal* epic, you'll be delighted and disturbed by his shorter-form, modern-era romantic comedies! You can find or order *Ohikkoshi*, his wonderful 248-page collection at any comic book store NOW (ISBN numbers 1 59307-622 3 and 978-1 59307-622-1!!) Samura's main offering, "Ohikkoshi," is a hilarious, non-stop barrage look at the lives of several university students as they fall in lust, make fun of their friends, ride motorbikes, get involved in strange contests, and try to avoid making life-changing decisions while drunk. You will NOT BELIEVE the amount of energy that Samura-dono's infused onto each page! A very different reading experience. "Luncheon of Tears Diary (Vagabond Shoujo Manga-ka)" is another hectic storytelling romp, as we follow Natsumi Funabashi (budding manga creator) through her years of lack, love, tragedy, torment, more lack and love, and then well something close to hope But it has funny moments, too—we promise! Oh, and you won't want to miss Samura's autobiographical piece "Kyoto Super Barhopping Journal (Bloodbath at Mi-dorogaike)," which kind of speaks for itself

"I think indie comics aficionados would find a lot to like in Ohikkoshi. *I know I did. In fact, I'd go so far to say fans of Bryan Lee O'Malley's* Scott Pilgrim *books would find themselves on very familiar footing with the title story. In all honesty, the lead story alone is worth the price of admission."*

David Welsh
Comic World News

"Samura's art style here is a bit different than his style in Blade, *but only because he tends to keep things tighter. Panel-to-panel storytelling is superb. A fun take on romance that goes for the heart without being sickly-sweet, Samura has produced something here that is very rare—a romance comic men will enjoy."*

Dan Grendel
Ain't It Cool News

"The book offers a compelling case for Samura's skills. If the samurai genre is his comfort zone, then this is about as far from his comfort zone as he can get, and the work is just as strong."

J. Caleb Mozzocco
Las Vegas Weekly

Find or order *Ohikkoshi*, Hiroaki Samura's wonderful, 248-page collection at any comic book store NOW!

GLOSSARY
(continued)

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal

Kirishitan: a Christian

Kotan: Ainu word for village or homeland

Kuichiru: Dōa has used several different names throughout her life, including Kuichiru and Towa

Kurusu: a Christian crucifix

Magai-ryu: A group of criminals who worked as assassins for the shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets. Disbanded by Hubuki Kagimura

Matenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa

Ryu: A sword school

Shisamu: Ainu word for the Japanese

Utari: Ainu word for friends and comrades, that is sometimes used to mean all Ainu

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare," from *su* — "well" + *asti* — "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika*, which moves in a counterclockwise direction, and is called the manji in Japanese. The *sauvastika* generally stands for night and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *haken kreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

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THE SPARROW NET

-part four-

GUFF
KOFF
UHNG...
"LOOK AFTER DŌA," HE SAYS...

OR MAYBE... SHE'S NEVER TRIED?
...MEANING THAT THE GIRL CAN'T EVEN SWIM?
BRRR...
...NOT GOOD.
DŌA... COME ON!
IF YOU JUST LIE THERE UNTIL THE SUN SETS, YOU'LL DO WORSE THAN CATCH COLD.
YOU HEAR ME?

.....
.....
.....
DŌA...
ARE YOU CRY-ING?
SHUT UP!!
IT'S YOUR FAULT... 'CAUSE YOU JUST...
...STOOD THERE.
...AHHN...

WHAT TO DO...
OHHH, WHAT TO DO...
NO! WHAT CAN I DO...?!
THEY'LL KILL HIM...
HOW CAN I--
ISAKU...
IT'S AWFUL... SO AWFUL...
STOP IT!
NOBODY'S DYING!

A HUGE GUY LIKE ISAKU...?
HE PROBABLY *BROKE FREE!*
AND EVEN IF HE'S CAUGHT...
RIGHT? *REMEMBER?!* THE GUY WITH THE *EYEBROWS?*
...THEY WOULDN'T KILL HIM! ALL THOSE *COPS?* *YOU* MURDERED THEM, NOT *HIM!*
HE AS GOOD AS *TESTIFIED* TO THAT.
.....
.....
.....
DŌA!
I'LL HELP OUT *ANY WAY* I CAN!
LET'S GO *HOME.* WE'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE HIM.

I'VE NEVER SEEN A MAN LIKE THAT...
ALL THAT STRENGTH. EVEN WHEN SURROUNDED...
...HE JUST SHIELDED US. HELPED US ESCAPE.
NOT MY FIGHT. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. BUT...
...JUST ABANDONING A MAN LIKE THAT...
...ISN'T RIGHT...
ISAKU... ISAKU...
DŌA!
SNAP OUT OF IT!
I NEED YOUR SKILLS. NOW!

I ABSO-LUTELY WILL NOT ABANDON YOU!
AND THE AUTHOR-ITIES CAN'T EXECUTE HIM, NOT FOR TOSSING PEOPLE AROUND...
YOU DON'T GET IT...
YOU, YOU... DON'T GET ANY-THING!
THEY'LL DO TERRIBLE THINGS...
WORSE THAN IF THEY CAUGHT ME...
ISAKU'S A KIRISHITAN !!
THE SON OF A BATEREN... WHEN THEY SEARCH HIM, THEY'LL FIND HIS KURUSU!

IF THEY FIND IT, THEY'LL NEVER FREE HIM.
THEY'LL TORTURE HIM FOR SURE...!
HHYUUUUUUU

Hyuuuuuu KTAKKTAK KTAKKTAK KTAKKTAK KTAK

IS THIS A JANTA SPEAR?
LET'S TAKE IT!
.....
.....
.....
ISAKU!!
CHANGE INTO THIS.
YOU'LL STAND OUT WHERE WE'RE GOING.

KU... KUI-CHIRU.
IS THIS YOUR... "JOUR-NEY"...?
NOT KUICHIRU! TOWA!
WE WON'T DO IT AGAIN.
I'M JUST TAKING IT BACK FOR THE UTARI.
BUT THESE BASHO UKEOININ TRICK US. THEY'VE STOLEN ALL KINDS OF THINGS FROM US.
I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME TOWA!
BUT YOU'RE NOT AINU, KUICHIRU.
NOW HURRY UP! THEY'LL FIND US!

LET'S CROSS THE SEA!
I WANT TO GO SOMEPLACE WHERE NOBODY KNOWS ME!

JUMING
THAIR THEY GO!
THET WAY!
TOWA! STUPID!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
STEALING WAS BAD ENOUGH! BUT KILL-ING?!
MAYBE YOU HAD TO BEFORE... BUT TODAY?!
BUT, BUT...
..I WAS SO HUNGRY. COULDN'T BEAR IT.
THAT JERKY, JUST HANG-ING THERE.
AND WHEN I REACHED, HE POINTED A GUN AT ME...

I...
I WAS
SO, SO
HUNGRY...
I COULDN'T
THINK
STRAIGHT.
IT ALL WENT
BLACK...
.....
.....
.....

I KILLED FOUR MEN...
.....
.....
.....
THERE WASN'T A CHOICE.
SHISAMU WON'T SHARE WITH STRANGERS.
AND IF WE STEAL...
...THEY DO THIS
THERE WASN'T ALWAYS FOOD IN THE KOTAN.
BUT IF YOU RESPECTED THE WAY, THE GODS OF THE HILLS AND RIVERS GAVE FREELY.
HERE, THINGS... EVERY-THING.
...BE-LONGS TO SOMEBODY. TO HUMANS.
I NEVER DREAM-ED...
WE HAVE TO STEAL.
IF WE DON'T STEAL, WE DIE.

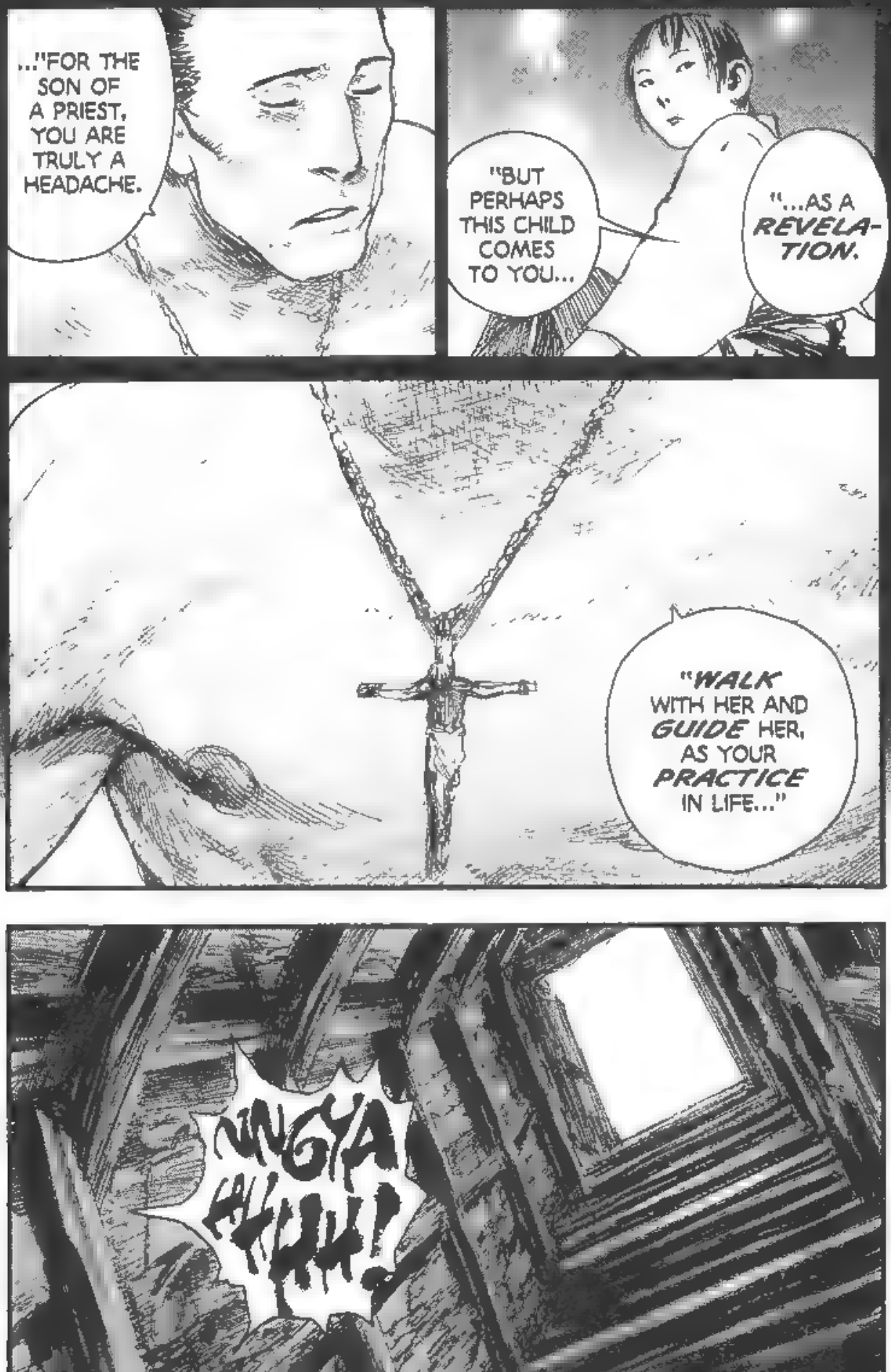
J...
...JUST... A CHILD...!
THUD!
IF YOU GAVE US THE CASH I WOULDN'T HAVE HURT YOU...

I KILLED FOUR MEN...
.....
.....
.....
THERE WASN'T A CHOICE.
SHISAMU WON'T SHARE WITH STRANGERS.
AND IF WE STEAL...
...THEY DO THIS
THERE WASN'T ALWAYS FOOD IN THE KOTAN.
BUT IF YOU RESPECTED THE WAY, THE GODS OF THE HILLS AND RIVERS GAVE FREELY.
HERE, THINGS... EVERY-THING.
...BE-LONGS TO SOMEBODY. TO HUMANS.
I NEVER DREAM-ED...
WE HAVE TO STEAL.
IF WE DON'T STEAL, WE DIE.

J...
...JUST... A CHILD...!
THUMP!
IF YOU *GAVE* US THE CASH I WOULDN'T HAVE HURT YOU...

TOWA.
HM?
IF... IF WE GO WAY SOUTH...
...THERE HAVE TO BE MOUNTAINS THAT NO ONE OWNS.
LET'S BUILD A HOUSE IN THE FOOTHILLS.
PLANT POTATOS AND LIVE THERE.
MM...
MM... POTATOES.
SOUNDS... INTEREST-ING.

ISAKU.
DON'T ABANDON ME...
BEFORE WE LEFT...
...MY FATHER TOLD ME...
I... I'D NEVER!
DON'T DISAPPEAR.


..."FOR THE SON OF A PRIEST, YOU ARE TRULY A HEADACHE.
"BUT PERHAPS THIS CHILD COMES TO YOU...
"...AS A REVELATION.
"WALK WITH HER AND GUIDE HER, AS YOUR PRACTICE IN LIFE..."
UNGYA HHHH!

OWNGH! GAWWD!?
IT HURTS, YOU DAMN QUACK!
IT FRIGGIN' HURRRTS!!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. ALL FINE...!

THEY SAID YOU WERE A SUTURING MASTER...
UP-- UP TO SEVEN STITCHES, YES...

GULP
.....
.....

GOOD... WE'LL TAKE HIM FROM HERE.
IT HURTS! AHNNG!
HAH HAFF
AGAIN IN THREE DAYS. PREPARE!
BETTER?
UNNG!
...!
D-DOCTOR!
IT'S ON... BACKWARDS!

WHAT ?!
OH, DEAR. HOW TRUE.
WHADDAYA MEAN, "HOW TRUE" ?!
S-SIR...!
YOU DODDERING FOOL!! REATTACH IT!
BUT SIR...!
IF WE TAKE ANY LONGER, MANJI'S ARM MIGHT--
HRRNNGG !!
ENOUGH! CANCELLED!
RESTORE THEIR ARMS!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
AIIEE!!! RIGHT NOW?! THAT'S...

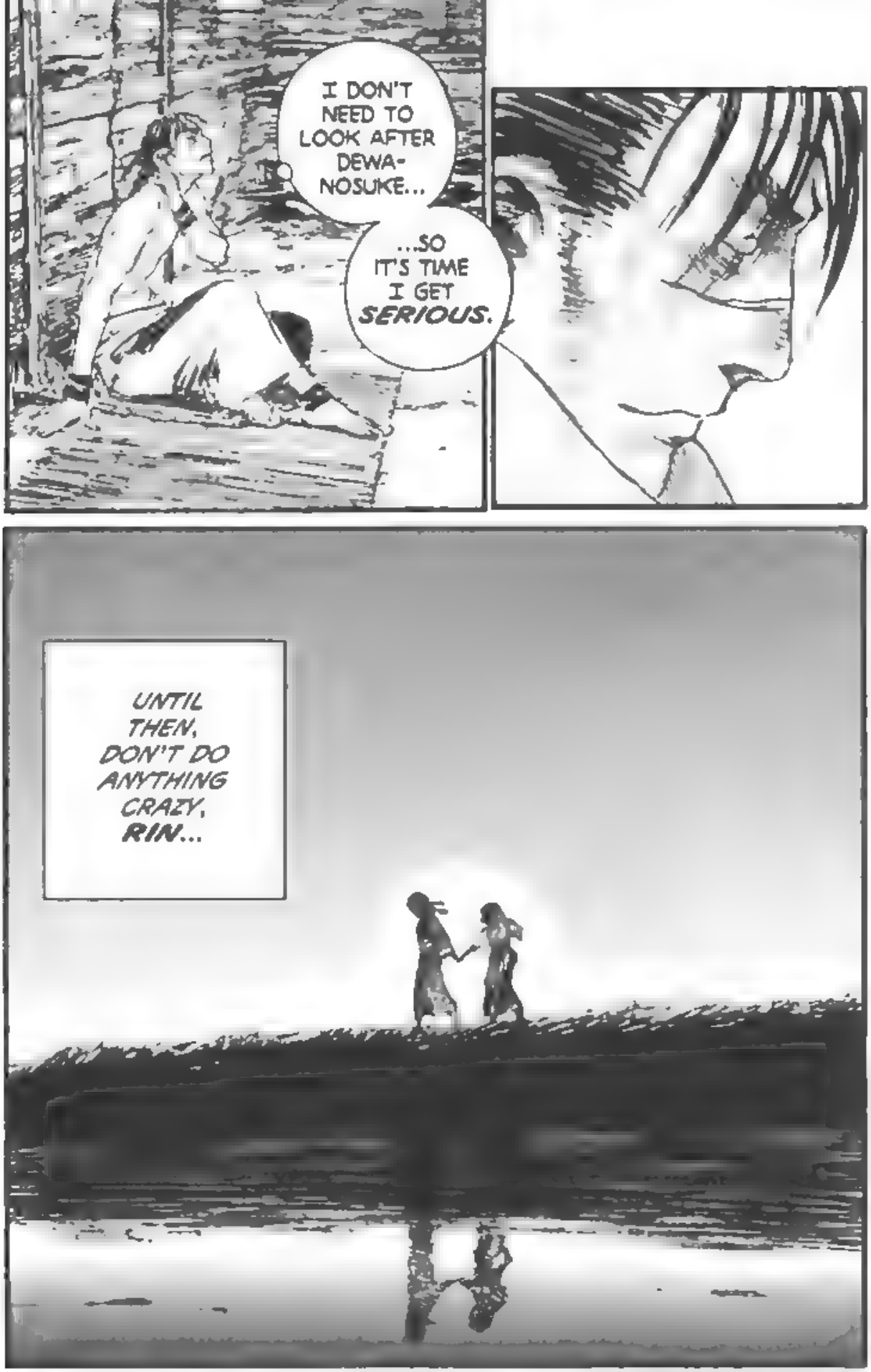
UMURUH...
.....
.....
.....
GRAHH!
WHAT ABOUT MY ARM?!
FINE, FINE. IT'LL STICK SOON.
RIGHT? TORA-EMON?
THIS IS GONNA STICK ?!
P-PARDON?! UH, ACTUAL-LY--
YOU IDIOT!!
DO SOME-THING!!
BUT, BUT SIR--

GGK!!

.....
.....
.....

HEEEK!
HIS HEAD! GET HIS HEAD!
YOUNG HABAKI!
THIS WHOLE SCENE HAS BECOME...
... A FARCE!
PEOPLE CALL ME KUBIKIRI ASA...
...BUT I NEVER TREAT A CRIMINAL'S BODY LIKE DIRT. THE SIGHT OF IT DOES NOT PLEASE ME.
SO I'M TAKING THE LIVER

UHFF!
THEY SCREW UP UNTIL THEY QUIT...
...OR BY SOME FREAK CHANCE IT *WORKS.*
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, THOUGHT I'D *WALK.*
BUT THAT'S IT... NO MORE OF *THIS.*



TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**

lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**

front cover colors by **DAN JACKSON**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū Jōjō* which was destroyed by the Itō-*ryū*.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *hatagashira* serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

Dōa, an Itō-*ryū* warrior, is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing their real connection.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Itō-*ryū*.

BURANDO

Deranged medical examiner, returned to prison by a disappointed Kagimura.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Burando, Kagimura's lead medical examiner, fails to transfer the powers of the *kessen-chu* to another human and is thrown into prison after losing his nerve and his grip on reality. Separated from both Manji and Isaku, with the Edo police on their tails, Rin does her best to comfort Dōa and plan their next move.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**

editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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NEXT MONTH

BAREFOOT, Part 2 of 5!

Rin's hard work as an amateur spy pays off and she gets a little closer to Dōa as her quest to find Manji continues. Kagimura's experiments are revitalized. Manji falls into dream and and twisted Doc Burando's dreams *come true*. Kanokozawa and Toraemon, the "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" of Samura's savage samurai epic, provide a little comic relief—and we need it! Our color back cover feature for issue #123 is a unique Hiroaki Samura geisha pinup colored by frequent *Blade of the Immortal* contributor Dan Jackson. See you next month when this dark tale takes a very strange turn.

Phillip Simon

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

After watching missionaries lay the groundwork for the colonization of the Philippines and other neighboring corners of Asia, Tokugawa Ieyasu formerly banned Christianity in 1614, deporting missionaries and killing Christians who refused to renounce their faith. Revolts by Christian believers were brutally suppressed, and surviving believers went underground, concealing crucifixes and other signs of their faith from the authorities. In a remote corner of distant Hokkaido, Isaku's father appears to have escaped the brutal repression.

"The meat tastes sweetest when the *maggots* come out," Kagimura's notion is that duck (and other wild animals) have a strong, gamey taste and texture and should be hung out to essentially rot a while before eaten. He's referring to Burando's state of mind, and not the *kessen-chu*. Burando was "afflicted" with ethical doubts and compassion before his return to prison. Now, he's essentially gone mad (rotten), the maggots have come out), and Kagimura senses that all of the old human feelings aren't going to be getting in Burando's way any more.

GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *bansha*.

Bansha: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Cho: Section of a city.

Dojo: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Goten-i: Doctors employed by the feudal lords who served under the shogun.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Kirishitan: A Christian.

Mugai-ryu: A group of criminals who worked as assassins for the shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets. Recently disbanded by Habaki Kagimura.

Mutenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Ōbanya: Arrestees were taken to one of Edo's seven *obanya*, sometimes known as *shirabe banya*, where they would be detained for questioning and rougher forms of interrogation to determine whether the police had a legitimate case against them or not. Those not cleared were sent on to the Kodenma-*cho* prison for further interrogation.

Ryu: A sword school.

Taisei: Europe.

Tomizutsu: Literally, a "far sight tube." Today's telescope.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

DARK HORSE 20 YEARS

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

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BAREFOOT 1 OF 5

HIROAKI SAMURA

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

color pinup by DAN HIPP

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BAREFOOT

-part one-

RIN, DEAR. LITTLE *RIN.* WE DROPPED BY KAGIMURA'S PLACE...
...AND GOT MANJI BACK.
HYAKURIN! GIICHI!
IS IT *TRUE?!* THANK YOU SO *MUCH!*
WELL... ACTUALLY, SEEMS LIKE THEY USED BITS OF HIM FOR ALL KINDS OF THINGS.
FACT IS...
...THEY SAID THERE WASN'T...
...MUCH *LEFT.*

EH?
LEFT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
BUT, HEY, WE DECIDED TO TAKE WHAT THEY HAD.
THE MAN'S IMMORTAL, SO THIS SHOULD DO.
HERE.

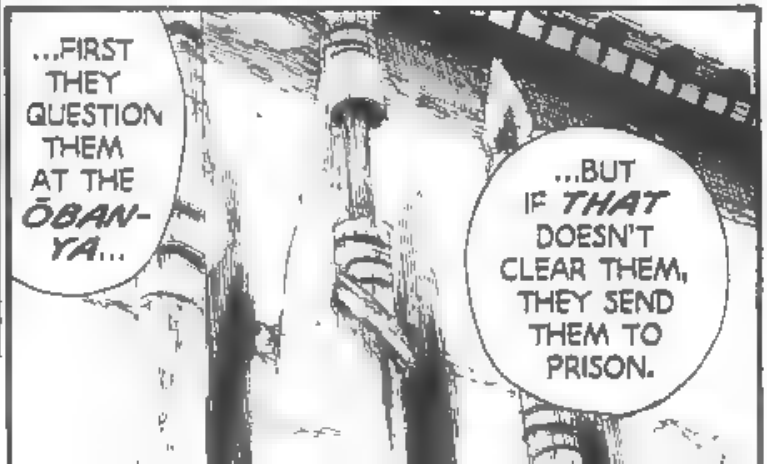
hand
Ah-
nah!
hand

DIDN'T HAPPEN, WON'T HAPPEN... RIGHT?!

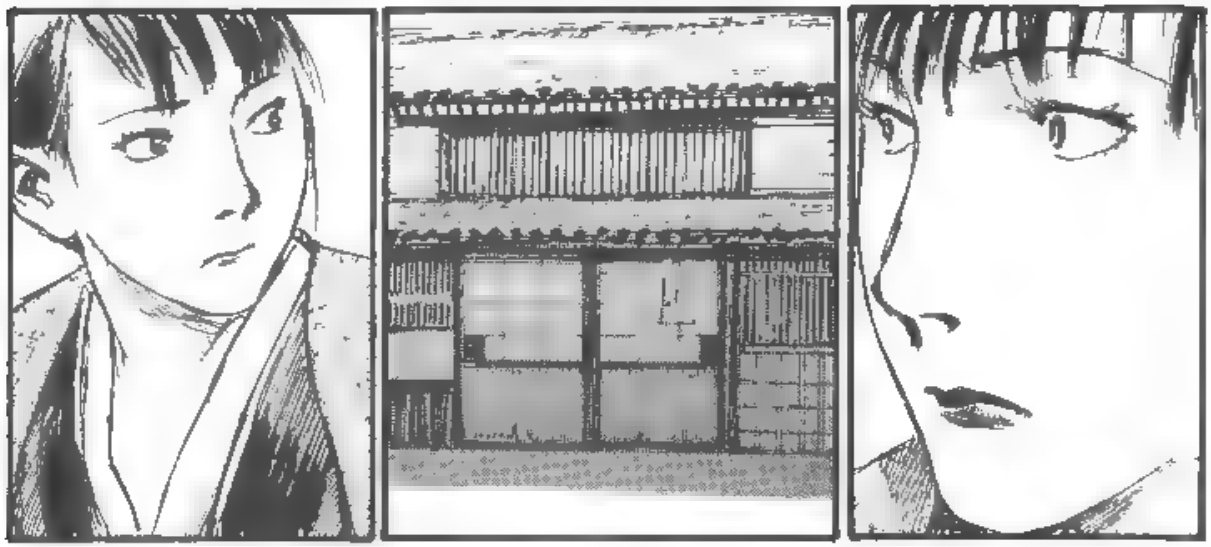
NGN...
MNG...
D...
D...
DŌA?!
.....
.....
.....
WHMP!
THWP THWP
...WHAT
A
SHOCK!

I'M THINKING ABOUT CHECKING OUT THE PRISON IN KODENMA-CHŌ.
DŌA.

WHEN THEY BRING FOLKS IN...


...FIRST THEY QUESTION THEM AT THE ŌBAN-YA...
...BUT IF THAT DOESN'T CLEAR THEM, THEY SEND THEM TO PRISON.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE ISAKU-SAN IS NOW. BUT WE DO KNOW...
...THEY'LL DRAG HIM TO KODENMA-CHŌ SOON.
AND, BY THE WAY...
...WE ARE NOT GOING THERE TO KILL.

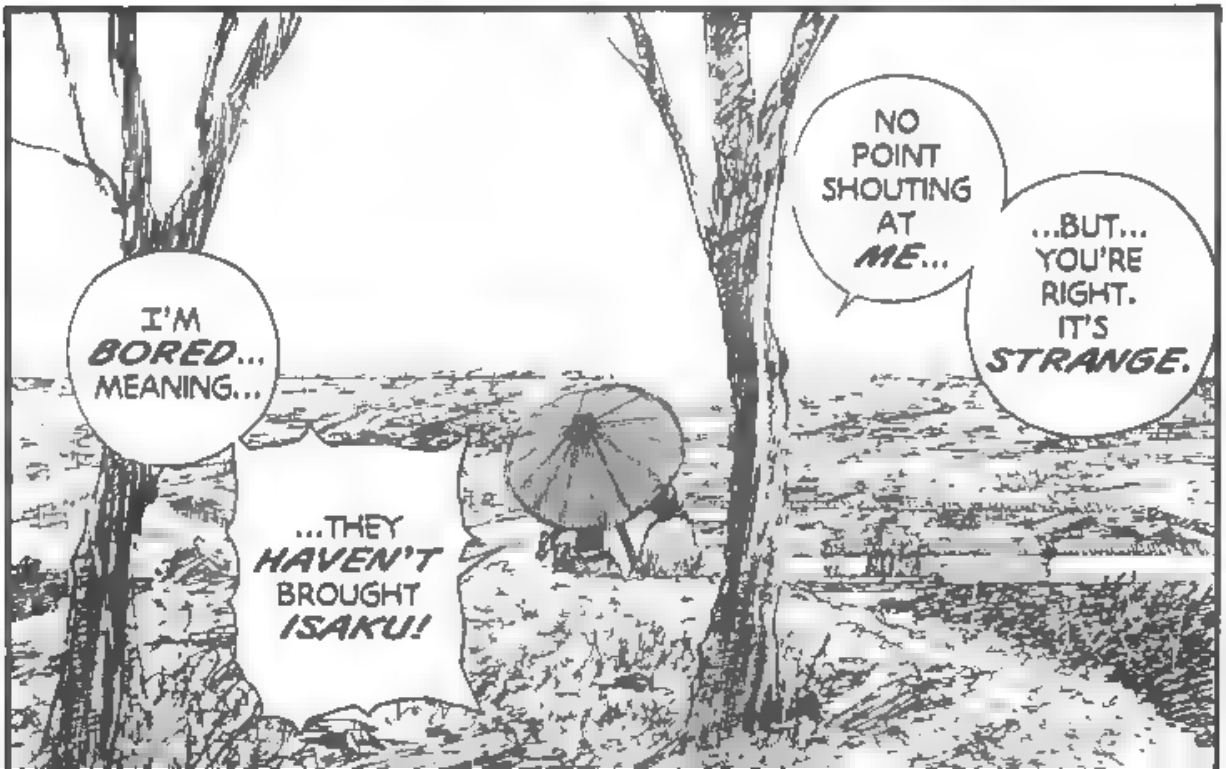


THE CITY'S SO... QUIET.
NOT SURPRISING, I GUESS, WITH ALL THE COPS OUT LATELY...
...ON THE SURFACE, EVERY-THING'S CALM AND SERENE...
...BUT I CAN FEEL A CERTAIN TENSION ALL OVER TOWN.
SIGNS: KNIFE GRINDING BONE SETTING

WHAT'S *THAT?!*
MY SECRET WEAPON. A *TŌMI-ZUTSU.*
I BORROW-ED IT FROM A PAINTER FRIEND.

GIMME! GIMME!
OKAY, BUT WAIT A-- HEY!! BE GENTLE WITH IT!
MONEY CAN'T BUY SOME-THING LIKE THIS!
THAT'S RIGHT. FOCUS ON THE GATE.
IF THEY BRING ISAKU, NOTE WHICH BLOCK HE'S IN.
WOW!!
EVEN IF HE'S KIRISHITAN, THEY WON'T TORTURE HIM RIGHT AWAY.
WE'LL FIGURE OUT HOW TO SPRING HIM THE VERY SAME DAY.
IT'LL ALL WORK OUT. AS LONG AS...
...YOU STAY CARE-FUL.

FOUR DAYS LATER...



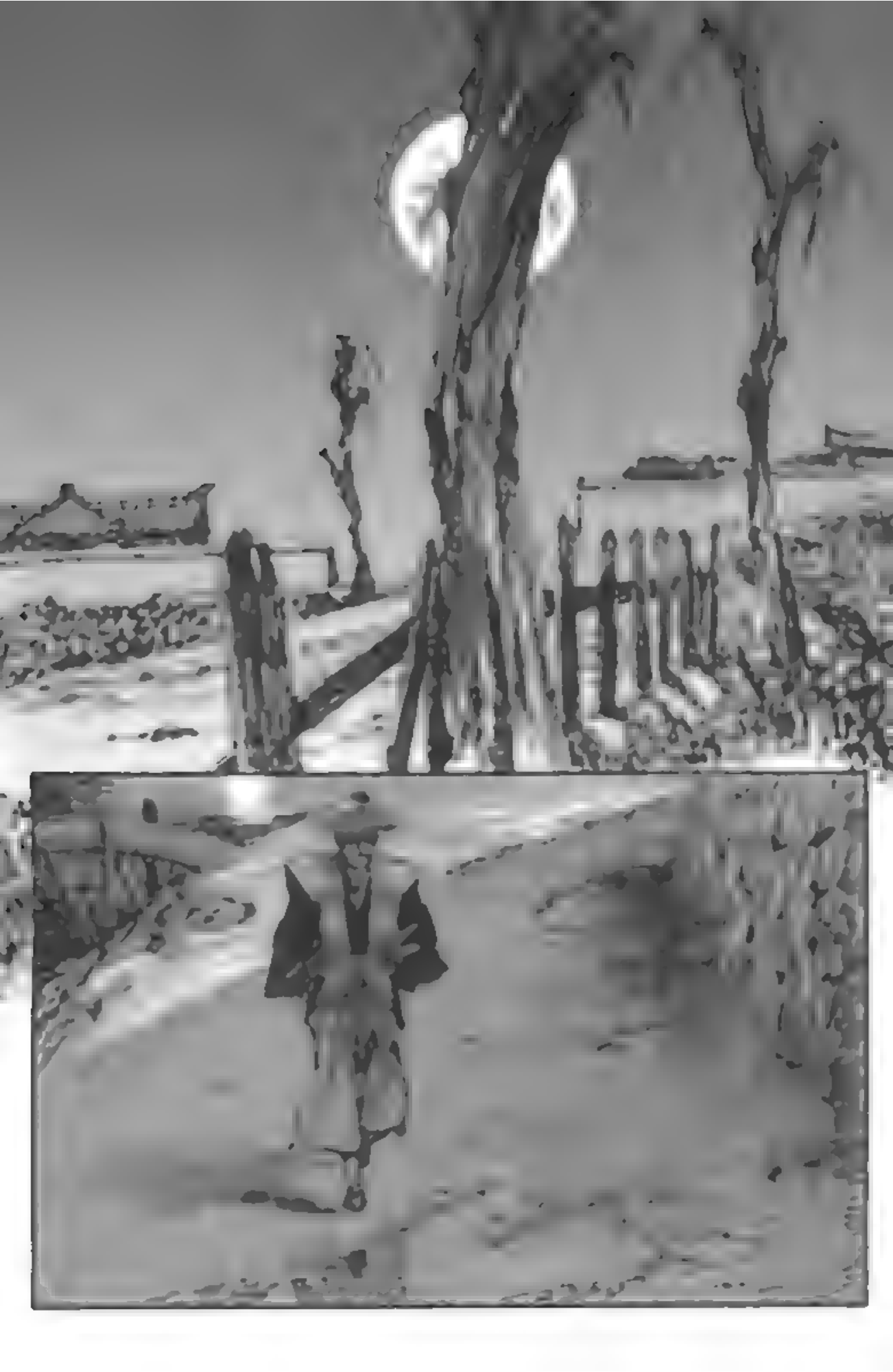
...FOR FOUR DAYS *STRAIGHT*. GUESS THAT'S A *GOOD THING*, BUT...
THEY HAVEN'T HAULED IN *ANY-BODY*...
.....
.....
THEN *WHERE'S* ISAKU?
...SOME WHERE.
...RIN. I NEED TO GO...
SO... SHE *DOES* HAVE FRIENDS...?
OH. OKAY.
I'M GOING TO ASK THIS GEEZER I KNOW.

I'VE GOT A FEELING I'LL NEVER FIND ISAKU IF I STICK WITH YOU.
THIS NEVER WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T GONE ALL CRAZY!
WELL-- THANKS A HEAP!
THAP THAP THAP
...hmph!
JUST DO AS YOU PLEASE!
I'VE GOT A MOUNTAIN OF STUFF TO DO!
IT'S NOT THAT I'M NARROW-MINDED, HEAVEN'S NO!
A MAN OF MY AGE, I'M MORE THAN WILLING!

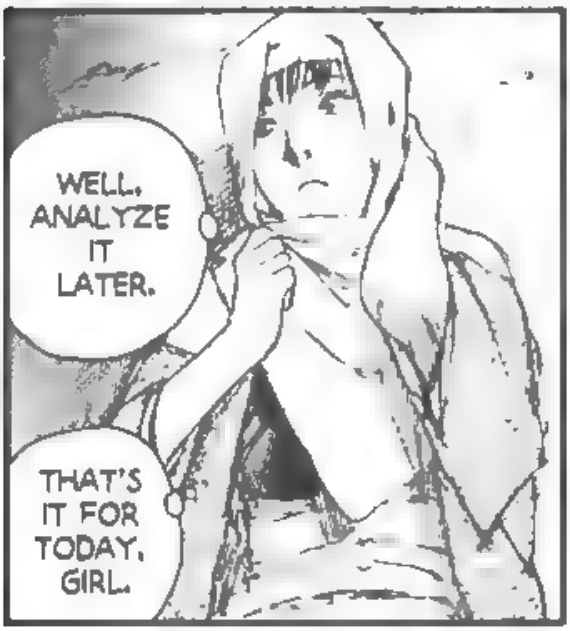
SOME YOUNG MAN SHOWS TALENT, GROWTH POTEN-TIAL...
...I GLADLY LET HIM TAKE CREDIT, I DO.
HMM, I'M AN HERBAL-IST. DON'T GET MANY YOUNG TURKS...
...KNOCK-ING ON MY DOOR.
RIGHT, DOCTOR? SURELY YOU'VE BEEN THERE YOURSELF?
I ALMOST ENVY YOUR PANIC, YOU GOTEN-I, REALLY.
P-PANIC?! NOW, DOCTOR!
IT'S NOT THAT! I'M SAYING, JUST TALENT ALONE...?
AH! YES, THE LAD NEEDS EXPERIENCE, MM?
YES! YES! THAT'S IT EXACTLY !!

HE'S BACK FROM TAISEI? SO WHAT?!
WHAT'D THE LITTLE SQUIRT LEARN IN TAISEI?!
CHOPPING UP CORPSES, STICKING 'EM TOGETHER ANY WHICH WAY, NOT EVEN A PRAYER?! IT'S PERVERTED!
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?! IS THAT MEDI-CINE?!
THEN WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING, EH?!
SHUT THE FUCK UP
IMBIB-ING, IT SEEMS, MORI-SENSEI.
YET, IMMORTALITY...? TO HAVE SUCH FANTASY THRUST UPON HIM... AND STILL CHARGE AHEAD? I RESPECT HIS PURITY, I DO.
IMMORTAL-ITY?
IS THIS A FAD...? SOME YOUNG MEN I KNOW SAY THEY MET AN IMMORTAL AND CROSSED SWORDS WITH HIM.
OH HOH ?!
MIZUSHINA-SENSEI, YOU BELIEVE SUCH FAIRY TALES?
IMMORTALITY. HMM...
IF SUCH A THING DOES EXIST...

...IT ISN'T MEDICINE. IT'S SORCERY.
KASHIN KOJI'S GONE?
NOT DRINK-ING AGAIN...?

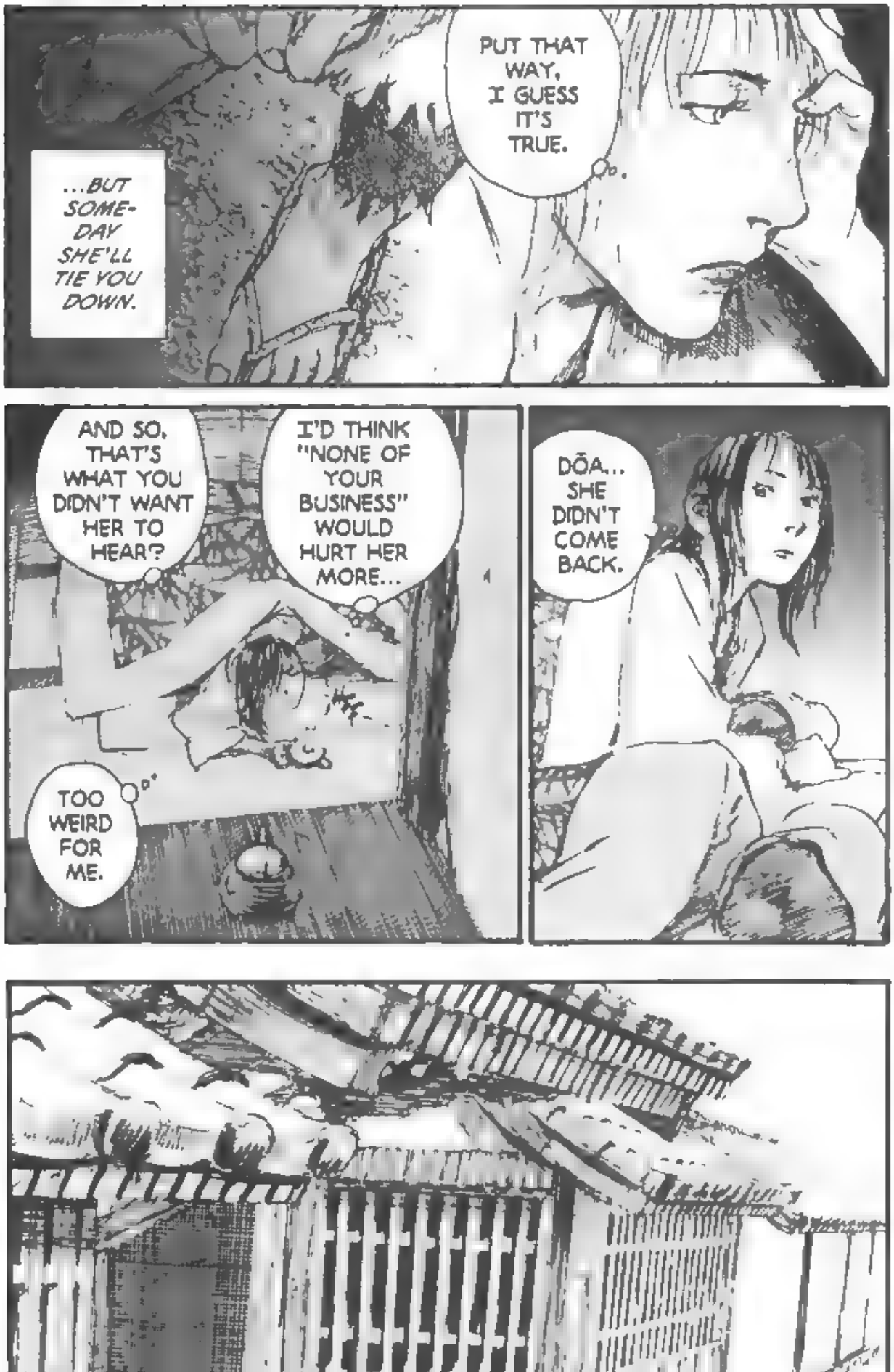


ALL BUT LOW-LEVEL SAMURAI WERE EXPECTED TO HAVE A SPEAR AND AT LEAST ONE RETAINER WITH THEM WHEN THEY REPORTED TO EDO CASTLE



...ALL I CAN SAY FOR SURE IS... HABAKI DIDN'T PLAN TO KILL MANJI.
IF HE'D WANTED THAT, HE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME TO DO IT.
!
AND THEN, I THINK IT'S CERTAIN, TOO...
...THAT MANJI'S NO LONGER IN KAGIMURA'S COMPOUND.
HABAKI HAS A WIFE AND CHILD.
HIDE MANJI FROM *THEM*...? NOT EASY, ESPECIALLY FOR THIS LONG.
WHAT IF HE GOT LOOSE WHEN HABAKI WAS AT THE CASTLE? HE'D BE RISKING HIS FAMILY.
WITH THE *MUGAI-RYŪ* GONE, HABAKI'S DUTIES ARE THE SAME AS ANY OTHER *BANSHŪ*.
IF THERE'S NO CRISIS, GO TO THE CASTLE ON TIME, *LEAVE* ON TIME.
IF THERE'S A DAY HE DOESN'T...

...THEN ON THAT DAY, HE'S WITH MANJI.
THAT'S AS FAR AS I CAN FIGURE IT.
.....
.....
.....
...ONE MORE THING.
FROM NOW ON...
...YOU SHOULD WORK ON YOUR OWN. DON'T ASK HYAKURIN.
WHATEVER ELSE, HABAKI DOESN'T RECOGNIZE YOU.
THAT'S YOUR ONLY STRENGTH.
HYAKURIN MAY FEEL LIKE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH...


PUT THAT WAY, I GUESS IT'S TRUE.
...BUT SOME-DAY SHE'LL TIE YOU DOWN.
AND SO, THAT'S WHAT YOU DIDN'T WANT HER TO HEAR?
I'D THINK "NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS" WOULD HURT HER MORE...
TOO WEIRD FOR ME.
DŌA... SHE DIDN'T COME BACK.

HM?
KENTARŌ. WHAT DO YOU TELL FATHER?

THE BOY STARTS SCHOOL TODAY...
HOH! HE DOES?

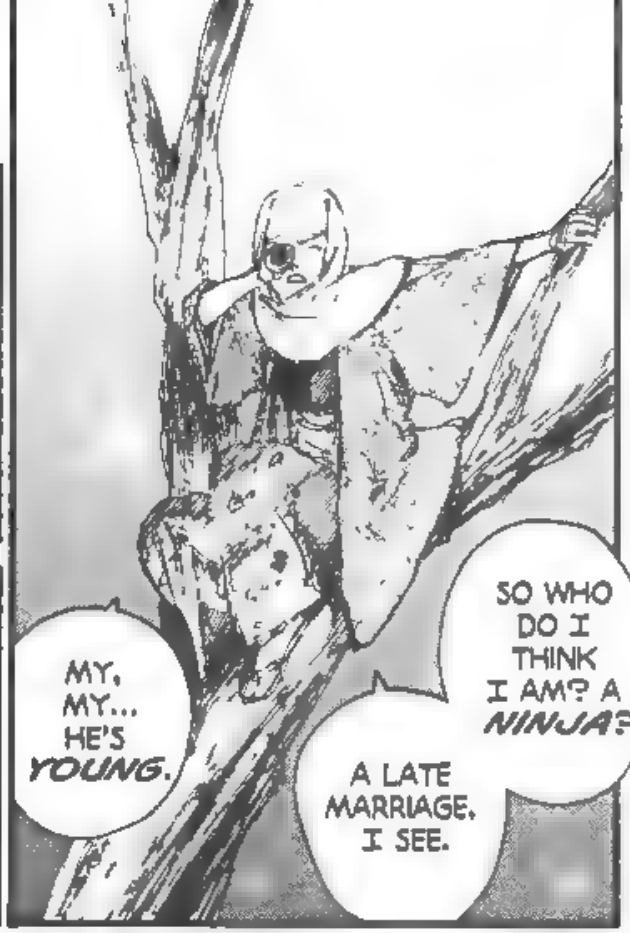
I'M SORRY, KEN-TARŌ.
IF YOUR FATHER HAD MORE TIME...

A BUSY FATHER MAKES KENTARŌ PROUD.

HMF...

SO THAT'S HABAKI'S WIFE...

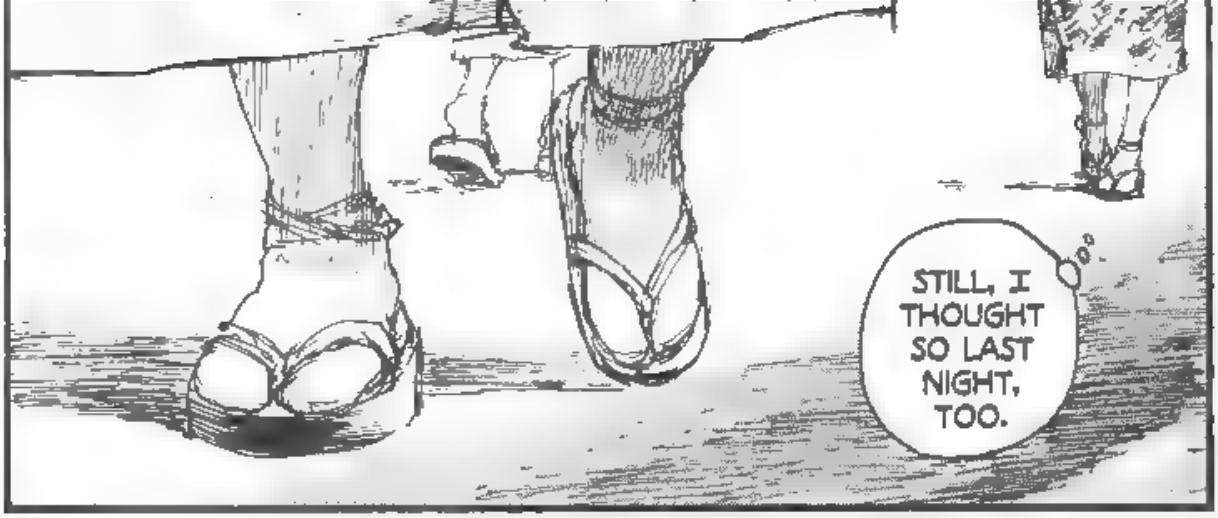
...AND SON.


MY, MY... HE'S YOUNG.
SO WHO DO I THINK I AM? A NINJA?
A LATE MARRIAGE, I SEE.

WELL, IT'S TRUE. IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S...
...HIDING SOME-ONE.

.....
.....
...HEH. HE SEEMS LIKE A GOOD FATHER.

...BUT SHE WON'T GET SENTI-MENTAL.
NOT THIS RIN-SAN.


STILL, I THOUGHT SO LAST NIGHT, TOO.

WHY DOES HE WALK AROUND LOOKING LIKE HE BIT INTO A STINK BUG?
HE SEEMED RELAXED AT HOME.

HABAKI-
DONO!
A MINUTE!
?
WHAT
?!

YOU GAVE HIM INK...?
NO, SIR. IT'S PROBABLY SOY SAUCE FROM HIS MEALS.

OH!

.....
.....
SO... IT WAS LIKE HUNTING DUCKS...
HEH.
DUCKS, SIR?
HEH HEH HEH...
THE MEAT TASTES SWEETEST WHEN THE MAGGOTS COME OUT.
TO BE CONTINUED...!

無限の住人

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
cover colors by **DAN JACKSON**

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Immortal *rōnin* vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge

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Powerful *bangashira* serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality

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Dōa, an Ittō-*ryū* warrior is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing their real connection

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Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Ittō-ryu.

BURANDO
Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference

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Infected by *kessen-chu* mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Burando, one of Edo's best surgeons, finds inspiration after being returned to prison, and he's desperate to return to his work. Separated from both Manji and Isaku, Rin acts on a tip from Gachi to spy on Kagimura and Edo Castle. Doa has other plans.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshu*

Banshu: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself

Dojo: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here, a training center for swordsmanship

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo

Hogan and Hōin: Types of *ten'i*, shogunate doctors

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal

Magai-ryu: A group of criminals who worked as assassins for the shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets. Disbanded by Habaki Kagimura

Mugai-ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa

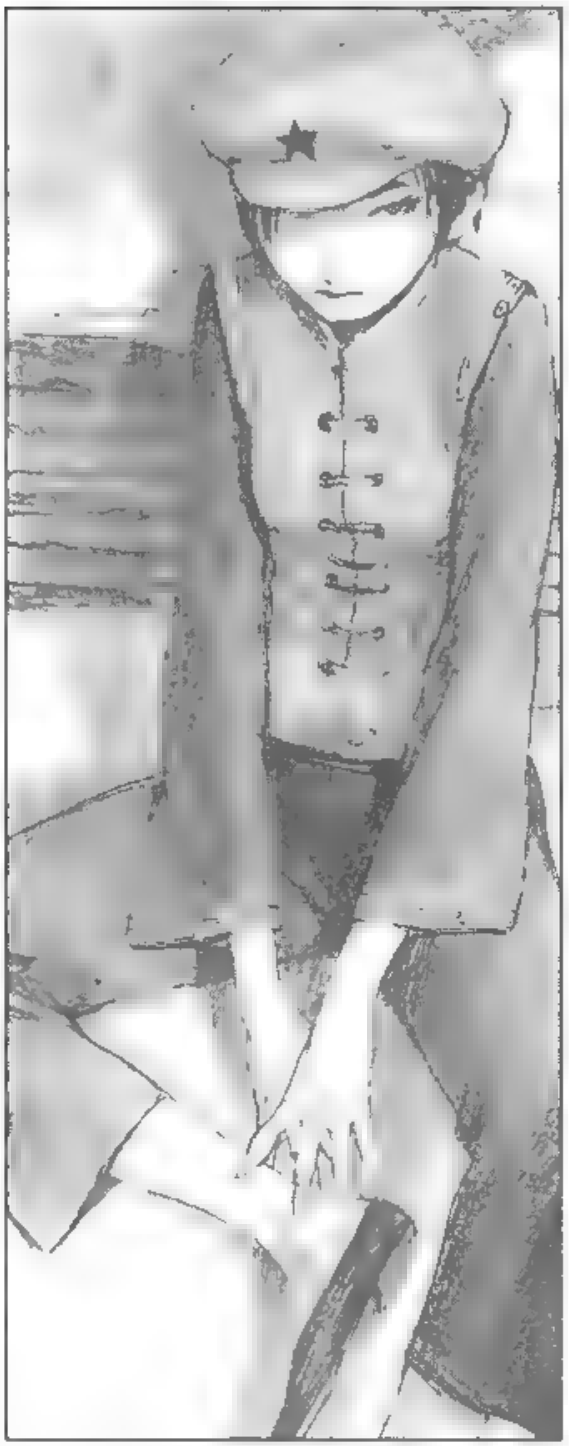
Ryu: A sword school

Ten'i: Doctor to the shogun and his ministers

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed by the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue: Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in the original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the un-retouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.



Doa by Hiroaki Samura—from a series of pinups in which he put *Blade of the Immortal* heroines in Chinese dresses. We'll have another bonus Samura pinup next issue!

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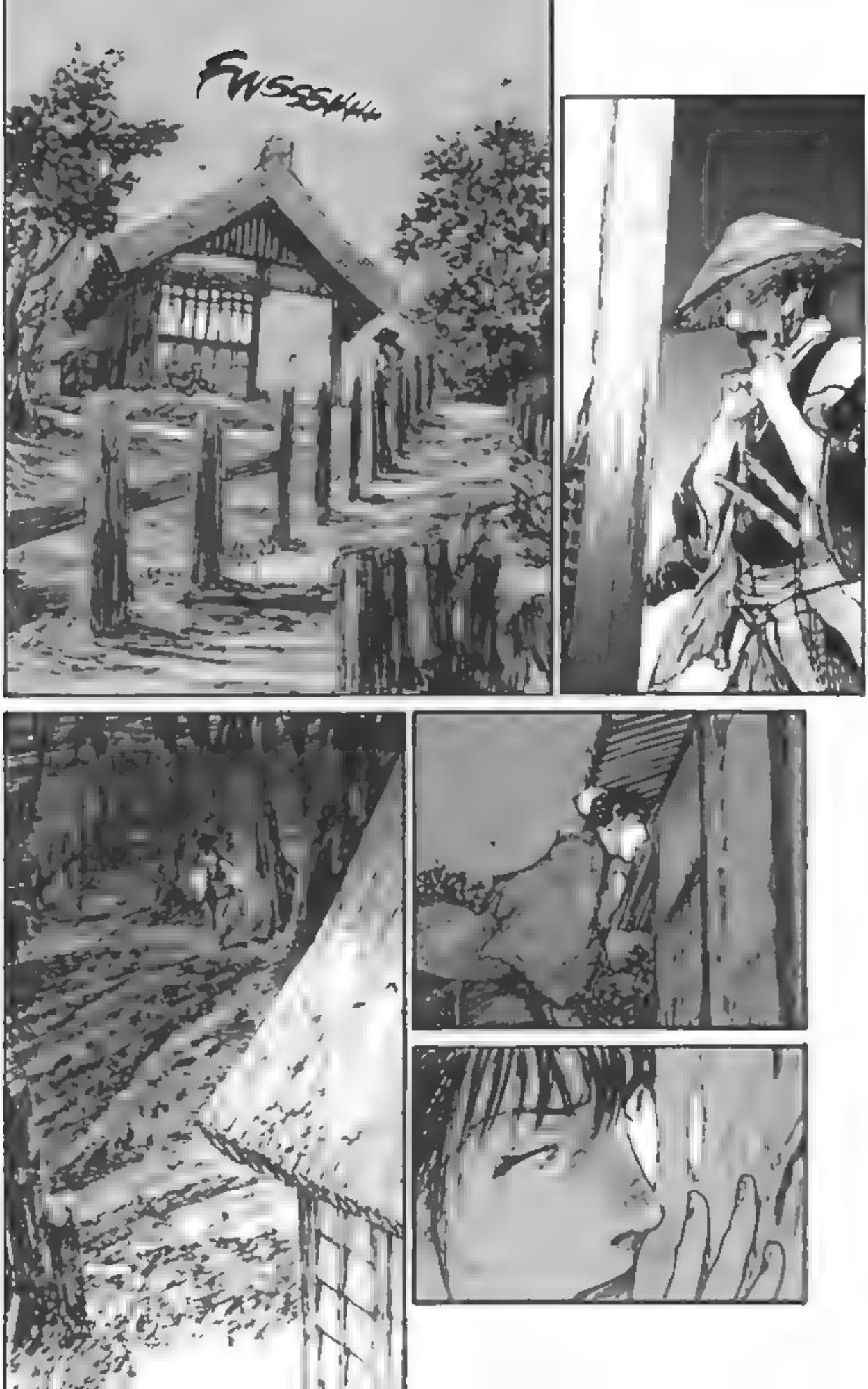
BAREFOOT

-part two -

FIVE DAYS TAILING HABAKI KAGI-MURA...
...AND FOR THE FIRST TIME...
...THE *VERY* FIRST TIME...
A DESOLATE PLACE LIKE *THIS*...?
...HE'S *NOT* GOING HOME.
AT LAST, AT LAST, AT *LAST!*
I'VE *SNIFFED* YOU OUT!


FWSSSHHH

A... WOMAN?
JUST ONE...
...NO... NO. TWO...
...TALK-ING ABOUT... WHAT?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
DARN WIND. CAN'T MAKE IT OUT...
AH?
KCHAK
SWOOSH
DAD--!!

FWSSSHH
WHAT'S WRONG?
MM...? NO-THING.
GIMME A BREAK!
A MIS-TRESS...?

GIVE ME A BREAK !!
SNAPP!
READ THIS?! THIS WORTH-LESS CRAP?!
D-DOCTOR.
CALM YOUR-SELF.
TORA-EMON...
...WAS IT?
.....
.....
.....
FINE...
OKAY. FINE...
..I SAW FOR MYSELF.

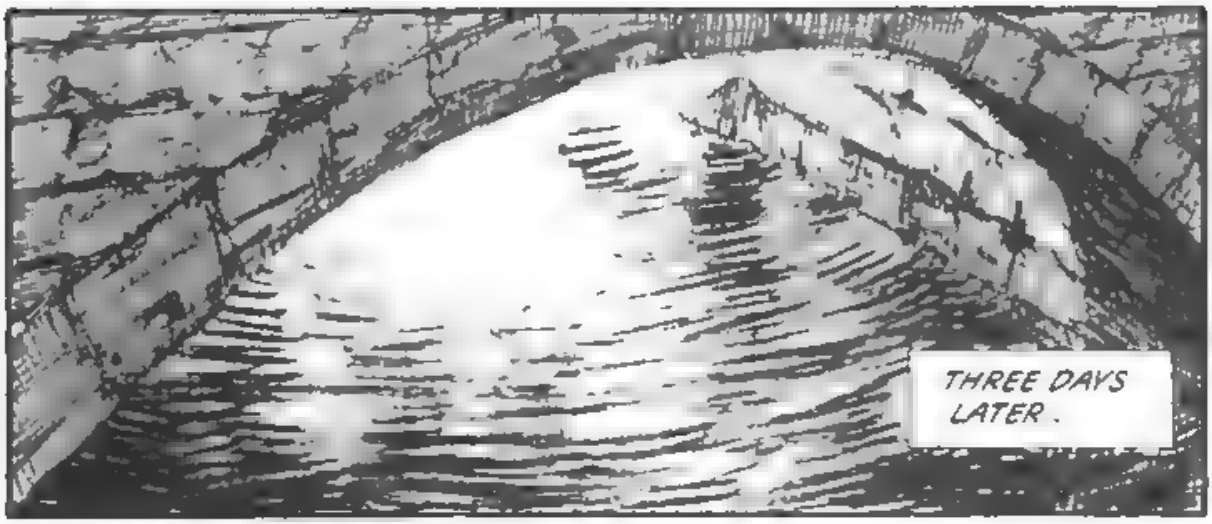
HIS BODY'S NOT NORMAL. IMMORTAL? I CAN'T SAY... BUT... NOT NORMAL.
I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT IT?!
WHAT THE HELL CAN I DO?!
MŌZEN! AYAME BURANDO! FOUR HŌGAN AND HŌIN!
THUD
THEY ALL FAILED!
YES, BUT WE THINK YOU--
DON'T YOU MESS WITH ME! IT'S A PLOT!
HE'S PURGING ANY DOCTOR HE DOESN'T LIKE! PROMOTING HIS PAWNS!

THIS "SURGERY"...?
IN-SANE! FROM DAY ONE!
I'M OUTTA HERE!
EH...?!
WAI--!
SENSEI, WAIT!
AT LEAST UNTIL HABAKI-DONO--!
STUFF IT!
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS CRAP! WHEN HABAKI-DONO GETS HERE, YOU TELL HIM THAT.
I DON'T CARE! GOOD RID-DANCE!
ERP?
HA-HABAKI...!

BURANDO-DONO?
EH? HIM?
!
...YO...
...TORA-EMON... BEEN AGES.

THEY PARDONED YOU! THANK GOD!
YES, YES...
BURANDO-DONO! IT IS YOU!
IT'S BEEN SO AWFUL SINCE YOU LEFT!
....
....
THE DOCTORS THEY BROUGHT IN!
CHARLATANS! ALL OF THEM!
NO TECHNIQUE. NOTHING.
YES?
YOU'RE EXCUSED.
.....
.....
.....

OH, SIR! LET'S GIVE IT OUR BEST!
BURANDO-DONO!


THREE DAYS LATER.

AARGH...

phew...

TOO MUCH FREE TIME. SEVEN DAYS UP HERE.
IT'S KILL-ING ME...
CAN'T BELIEVE THAT PIT WAS THE SAME CASTLE...
HN?
OHH! IS THAT TORA-EMON?!
SO! YOU FINALLY GOT THE CHOP?
HAH HAH HAH! JOKING! JUST JOKING!
IT'S JUST BREAK TIME, RIGHT?
HN?
FRIEND...

...WHAT'S *WRONG*? YOU LOOK *AWFUL*?
OH. KARU-KOZAWA-*SAN*. EH? AWFUL?
...DO I?
WELL, UH... NOT *SURPRIS-ING!*
ALL THOSE *QUACKS*...? SICKENS THE *HEART* MORE'N THE *BODY*.
AND *SO*? WHAT KIND OF DOC IS IT NOW...?
ACTUAL-LY, IT'S...
WHAT?!
BURANDO-*DONO'S* BACK?!

I SEE, I SEE! THAT'S GREAT!
THUD!
GREAT?
EVEN A LAYMAN LIKE ME COULD SEE HE HAD THE SUREST HANDS.
AND NATURALLY, THE OTHER SAWBONES FRETTED ABOUT THEIR STATUS...
...WHILE HE HAD NOTHING TO LOSE.
KAGIMURA-DONO SPOKE HARSHLY...BUT HE'S THE BEST, ANY WAY YOU CUT IT!
MAYBE THAT LIGHT-NESS OF BEING...
...WAS THE SOURCE OF HIS BOLD-NESS?
TRUE, AT THE START, HE WAS TOO BOLD...
...EVEN CRUEL...
...BUT REMEMBER HIS PARTING WORDS?

"PEOPLE ARE NOT OTTERS!"
AH, THOSE WORDS. STRUCK ME TO THE HEART!
I THOUGHT, HERE'S A DOCTOR WHO VALUES LIFE...
HN?
OT- OT- OTTERS...
HEEK!!
WHOA!
TORA-EMON. YOU OKAY?

K-KARU-KOZAWA-SAN...
THE... MAN YOU REMIND ME OF...
...AND THE MAN... DOWN THERE...
...TRULY... THEY'RE DIFFERENT PEOPLE!
HE... THAT MAN... HAS CHANGED...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... W-WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM...?!
THAT'S IT FOR TODAY.

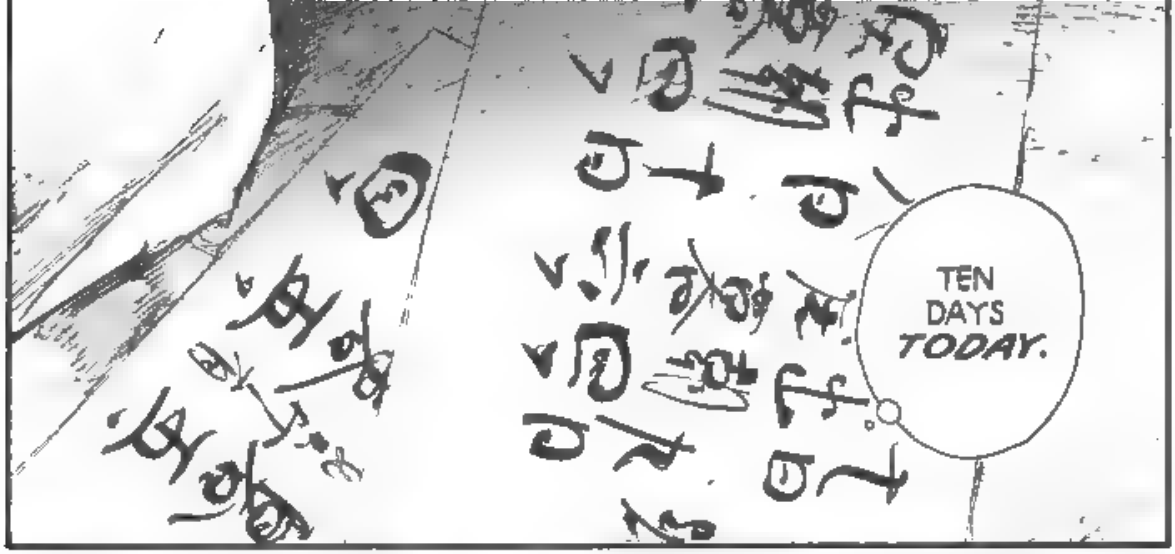
FOUR...
...DEAD!!
TELL HABAKI-DONO I WANT MORE...
SECONDS, ANYBODY?!

WOOF!
SCUDDLE!
WHAT'S WRONG, TORA-EMON?
CAN'T STAND THE SMELL?
FOR *SHAME*. HAVE TO GET USED TO IT. OR... IS *THAT* IT?
TO YOUR EYES THEY STILL LOOK...
...*HUMAN*?
.....
.....
.....
TUT. HAVE TO BOTHER HABAKI *AGAIN*.

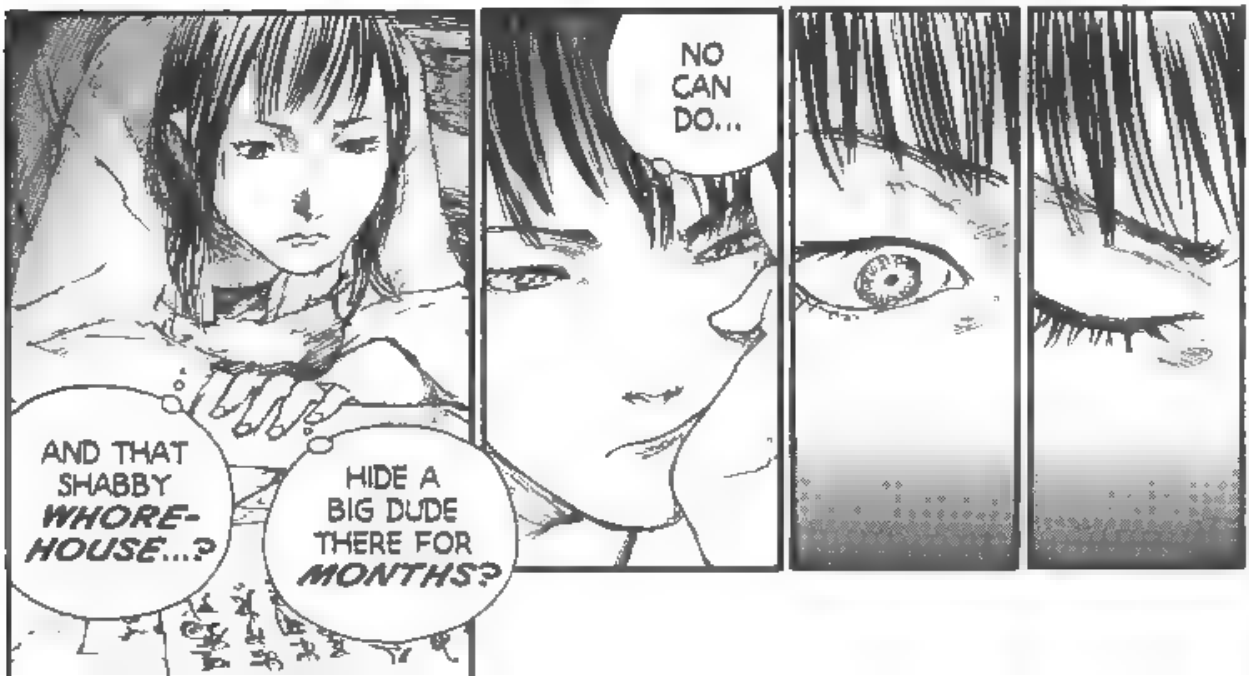
TWO DAYS LATER...
TORAEMON! BEHOLD!
OTTER HOODS!
AH HAH HAH HAH! NOT BAD, HUH?
IF YOU CAN'T TELL 'EM APART, WHO CARES IF THEY LIVE OR DIE...

YOU'LL BE *FINE* NOW? RIGHT?
WELL, ISN'T IT *BRACING* TO HAVE OUR BOY BURANDO BACK...
.....
.....
...HUH? YOUNG HABAKI?
PERKS ME UP JUST *WATCHING* HIM!
.....
.....
BRAC- ING, HMM...?

GYAH!!
TORA-EMON!
MANJI'S LEG!


TEN DAYS *TODAY.*

...EATING OR DINING WITH COLLEAGUES... *ZERO.*
VISITING HIS MISTRESS... *ONCE.*
AND AS FOR HABAKI...

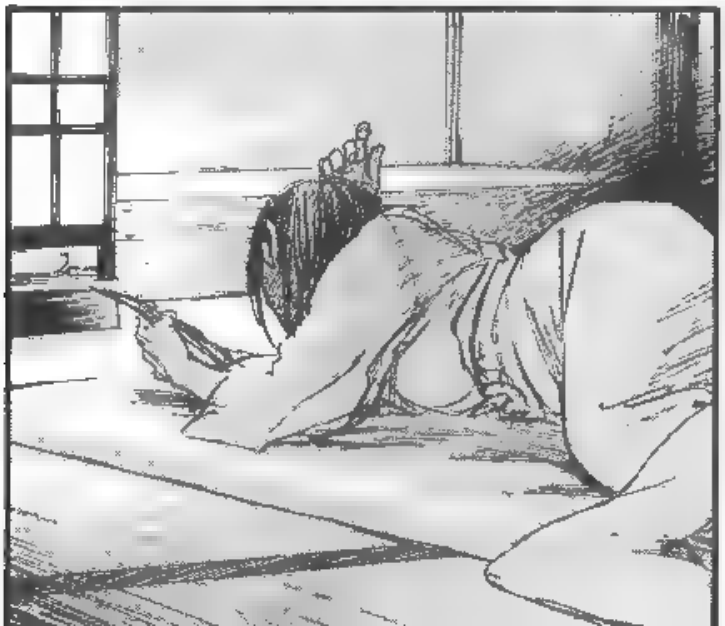

NO CAN DO...
AND THAT SHABBY *WHORE-HOUSE...?*
HIDE A BIG DUDE THERE FOR *MONTHS?*

I DON'T GET IT!!

I JUST DON'T! FOR THE LIFE OF ME!
SHEESH!
FWOO
TAILING AND TAILING HIM! FOR WHAT?!

ALL I KNOW IS, HABAKI GETS HOME...
... LATE NIGHT. EARLY EVENING. DIFFERENT TIMES...

.....
.....
.....



...COULD IT BE...
HE'S MEETING MANJI IN...?

TOK THUNK THUNK
DŌA...?

...DŌA.
THERE, THERE...
...WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOJ'RE FILTHY.
:sniff:

I SEE... SO YOU NEVER SAW...
...YOUR OLD MAN?
AND THEN... THEN COMING BACK...
...THOSE COPS AGAIN. I GOT AWAY, BUT...
...MORE OF 'EM. AROUND HERE...
AND THAT'S WHY YOU STAYED AWAY?
TEN DAYS?! IN THIS WEA-THER?!
.....
.....
.....
YOU'RE SO TINY, DŌA...

...SO QUICK ON YOUR FEET...
...YOU COULD SHAKE THEM EASY.
IF... ISAKU WAS HERE, I COULD SHAKE THEM...
...KILL ALL OF 'EM, EASY...
...BUT... BUT, ALL ALONE... I DUNNO WHAT TO DO!

ISAKU...
...WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?!
...ISAKU...
TOO STRONG? TOO *WEAK*...?
YOU MYS-TERIOUS CHILD...
TO BE CONTINUED...!

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HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira* serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

Dōa, an Itō-*ryū* warrior, is slowly befriending Rin, with neither of them knowing their real connection.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard and member of the Itō-*ryū*, recently imprisoned for a street fight Dōa started.

BURANDO

Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference.

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Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Kagimura's unconventional head doctor, Burando, is finally released from his own stay in prison, and he returns to the experiments with renewed vigor. In order to deter any emotional attachment for the doomed inmates that he works on, he orders that they all wear crude otter masks. Separated from both Manji and Isaku, Rin acts on a tip from Glichi to spy on Kagimura and Edo Castle.

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Bangashira: Head of the *banshu*.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Bugyo: a high-ranked samurai in charge of keeping the peace, with the help of the men under his command and volunteer "posse" members.

Dojo: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kessen chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Matenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Oku Ishi and Omote Ishi: Inner sanctum doctors (*oku*) and those on the outside (*omote*).

O-Shiroi: The white powder makeup of the Edo period, still worn by *geisha* and their *maiko* apprentices.

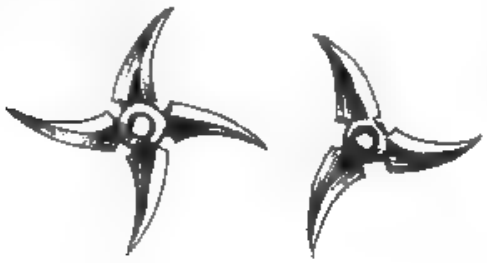
Ryū: A sword school.

Ten'i: Doctor to the shogun and his ministers.

Wakadoshiyori: While the *go-roju* elders were the *shogun's* closest advisors, an advisory council of *wakadoshiyori* lords were the hands-on managers of the shogunate bureaucracy.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork: The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Some manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.



Rin by Hiroaki Samura, from his "China Cats" series of pinups.

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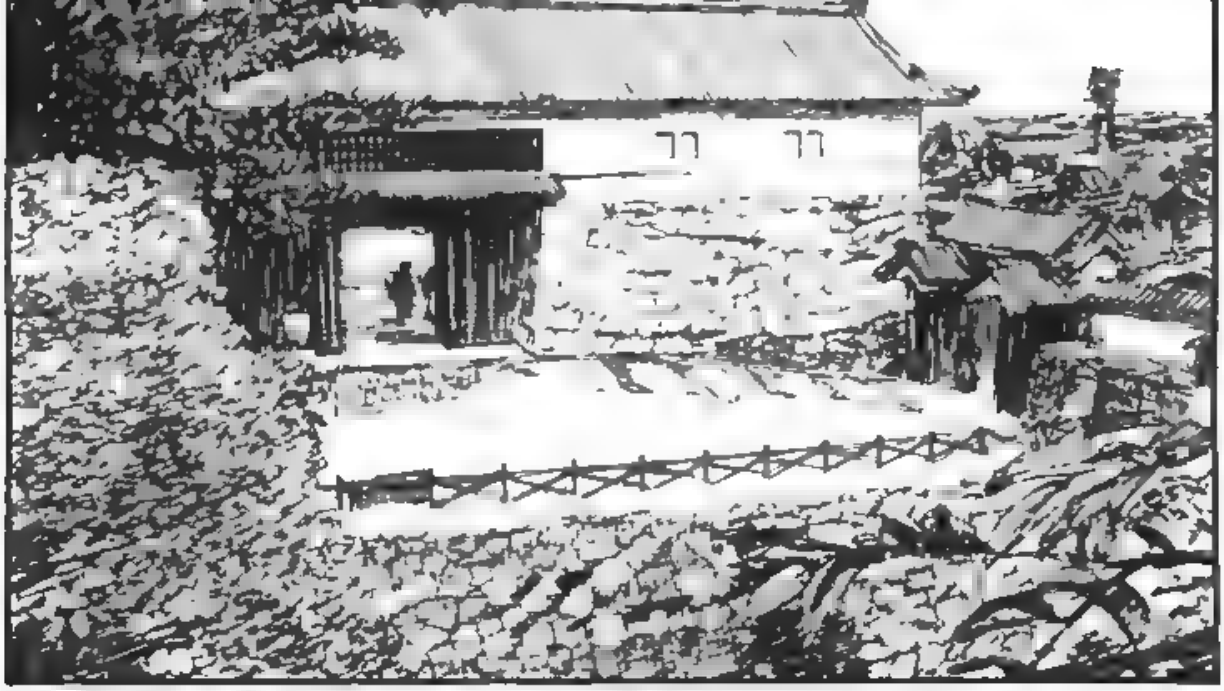
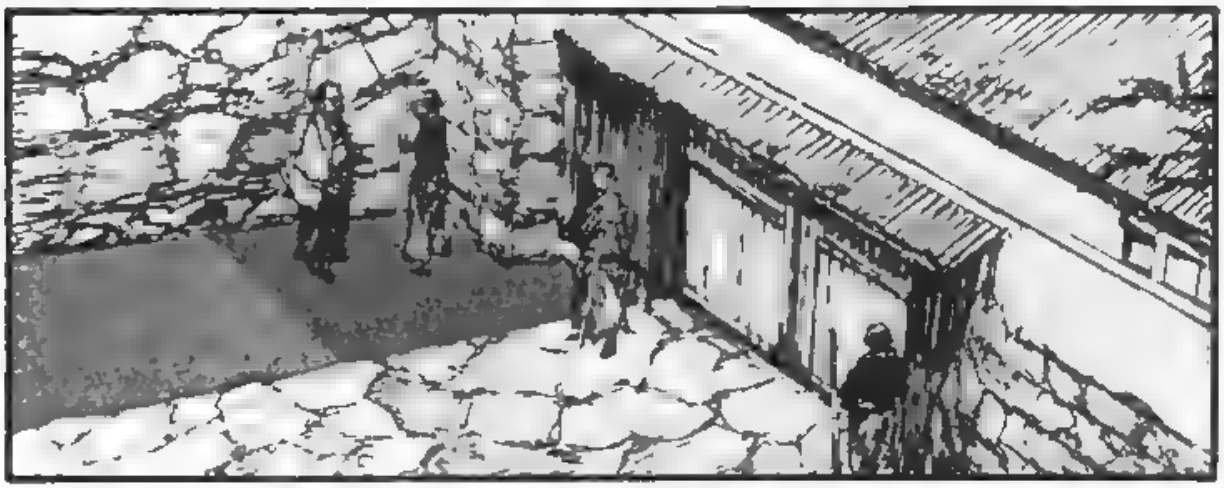
-part three-





THIS ONE'S HOPE-LESS.

RIN. LET *ME* LOOK NEXT TIME.

C'MON! *PLEASE?* LET *ME.*
BE QUIET!

THIS ONE, TOO.

BORRR-ING...

IS HE REAL-LY IN THERE?
PEH!
STOP IGNOR-ING ME !!
...RIN?

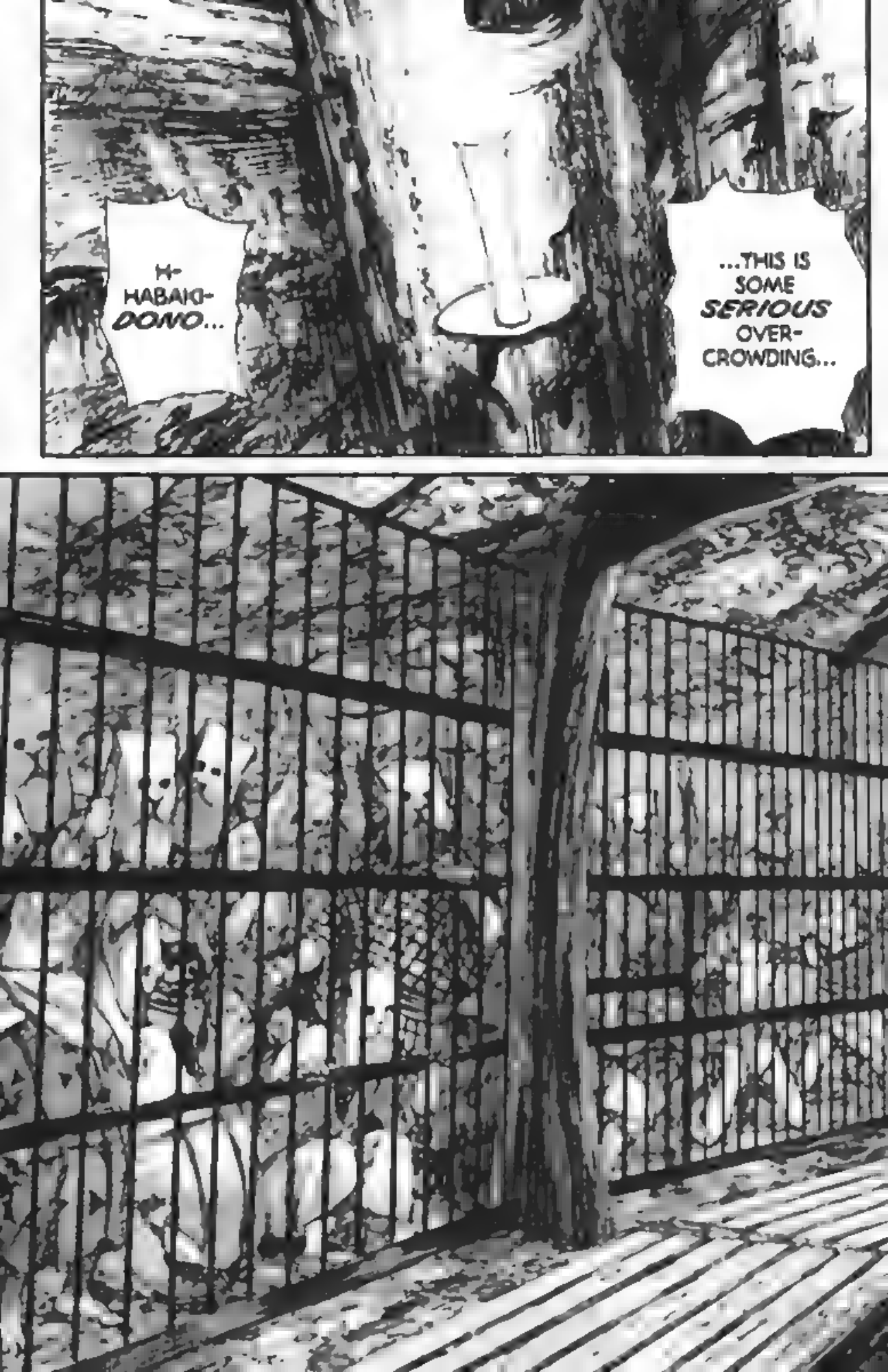
WHY, YOU--
!?
YOU HAVING YOUR PERIOD?
YOU'RE ALL WEIRD.
EVER SINCE WE LEFT KOJI'S.
I'M RIN ASANO. I LIVE OVER NEAR SHITAYA...
HOH HOH?!
.....
.....
SORRY.
RIN, ARE YOU? EVEN PRETTIER THAN YOUR NAME.

SHE'S PUTTING ME UP.
I SEE. I SEE. DON'T FORGET TO THANK HER.
OH, IT'S NOTHING...
DŌA. IS THAT O-SHIROI?
HN? YEAH...
HARDLY RECOGNIZE YOU IN THAT.
REALLY? YOU LIKE?
NOW YOU BE CAREFUL GOING HOME.
WAIT!
YOU NITWIT! WHAT ELSE CAN I SAY?!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW WHERE ISAKU IS?!
BUT EVERYONE SAYS KASHIN KOJI'S TIGHT WITH OFFICIALS...
I SAID-- DON'T CALL ME THAT.
OFFICIALS? JUST DOC-TORS! TENI!
THE SHOGUN'S RHEUMATISM... SOME BUREAUCRAT'S HEMOR-RHOIDS... THAT'S ALL I HEAR ABOUT.

P-PARDON ME! DON'T THE GOTEN-I KNOW OTHER THINGS...
...ABOUT THE CASTLE?
HNN?
I MEAN, ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS MISSING, TOO...
...AND THINKING ABOUT IT, IT'S POSSI-BLE...
...HE'S BEING HELD IN THERE...
WOW! THEN MAYBE ISAKU'S THERE, TOO!
HE IS! I'M SURE OF IT!
STOP YOUR BLATHER-ING!
JUST FORGET IT!
I KNOW NOTHING. EVEN IF SOME TENI DID KNOW, HE'D NEVER TELL A TOWN DOC.
WELL, FINE!
WE'LL SNEAK IN AND SEE. RIGHT?!
EH? UHM, SNEAK IN...?
DŌA!!
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

RILE THE SHOGUN-ATE NOW...
...IT HURTS YOUR PRECIOUS "BOSS"...
IT'S THE SAME WITH MY PROJECT.
THIS IS MY WINDOW. TALKING DOCTOR TO DOCTOR. IF WE STIR THINGS UP AND PUT THEM ON GUARD...
...EVERY-THING'S LOST.
AS FOR ISAKU...
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!

...REALLY?
OF COURSE! NO ONE'S SAYING ABANDON HIM!
...I'LL WORK IT... USE SOME CONNEC-TIONS.
BUT THE TRUTH IS, IT'S A BAD TIME TO POKE AROUND.
THEY'RE ROUNDING UP OMOTE ISHI AND OKU ISHI FOR SOME FOOL "IMMORTALITY" EXPERIMENT.
ONLY THE DROP-OUTS HAVE TIME FOR ME.
AN EXPERI-MENT?
IN IMMOR-TALITY ?!


H-
HABAKI-
DONO...
...THIS IS
SOME
SERIOUS
OVER-
CROWDING...

I WAS SUMMONED BY WAKA-DOSHIYORI SYMPATHETIC TO THE EXPERIMENT...
...THEY SAID THE PAPER-WORK FOR ALL THESE PRISONER TRANSFERS IS ONEROUS AND THE PRISON BUGYŌ'S REPUTATION IS AT RISK...
...BUT THEY'LL TURN A BLIND EYE IF I PLACE THE FELONS UNDER MY JURISDIC-TION.
WE CAN'T HAVE THAT ON THE SHOGUN'S DOORSTEP.
DAMN!
FREE ME!
LET US OUT!
SPARE ME EE
...WE CAN'T HANDLE THE FOOD OR THE WASTE.
WHAT IF THERE'S AN EPI-DEMIC?
BUT... BUT, SIR...
HAVE NO FEAR, HABAKI-DONO.

BURAN-
DO...
NO SUCH THING AS TOO MANY. ONE MAN, ONE PERCENT...
...TEN MEN, TEN PERCENT CLOSER.
THEY WON'T HAVE TIME TO GET SICK.
NNNGG GYAAA!

HOLD HIM LIKE THA~
NOOO!
NOOO! STOP! DOHMN'T--
BURANDO-DONO. NOT TO BE PRESUMP-TUOUS.
...BUT MAY I ASK SOME-THING?
RIGHT. NEXT!

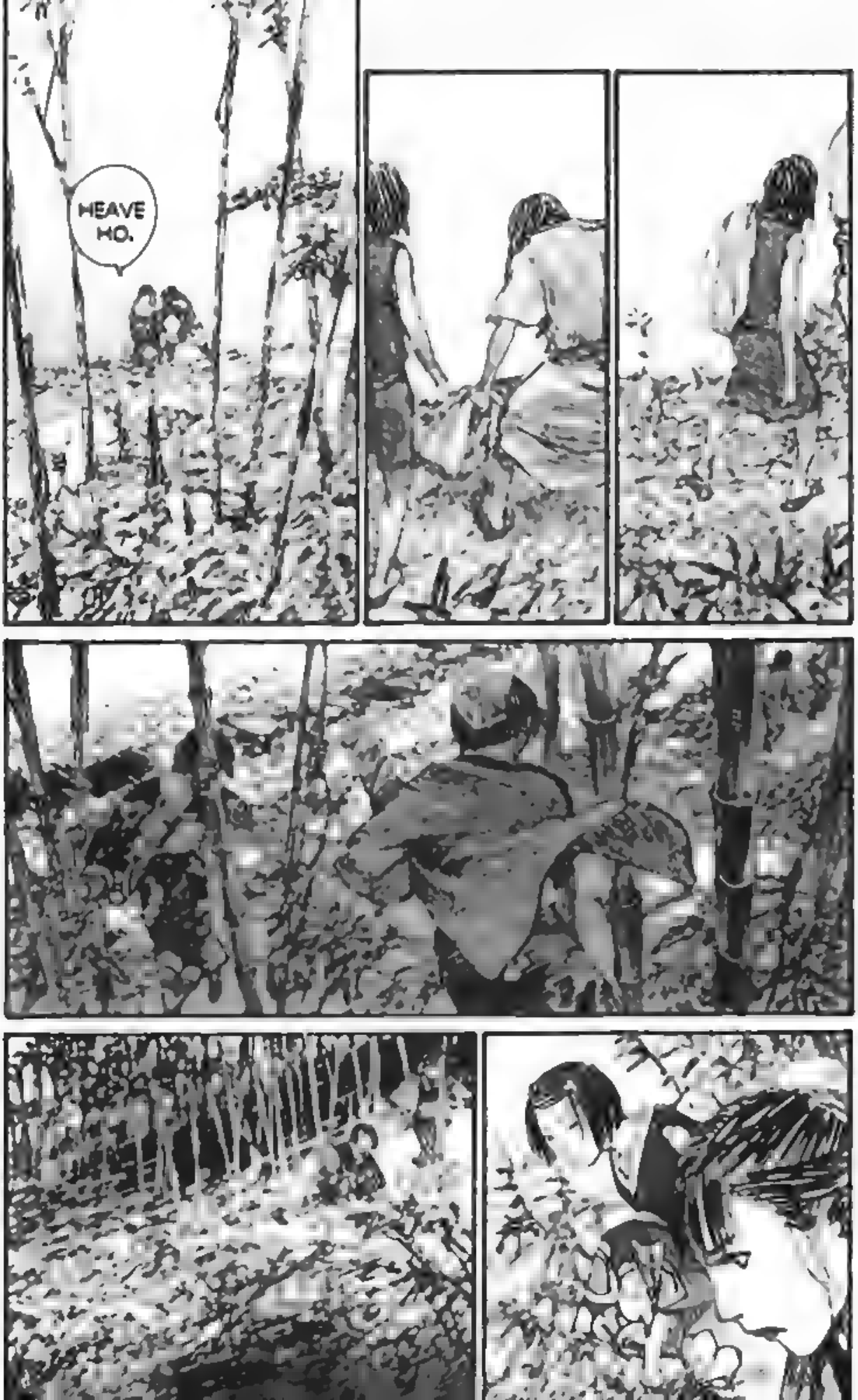
THIS SURGERY YOU'RE DOING...?
HOW IS IT ANY DIFFERENT...
...FROM *BEFORE* YOU WERE JAILED?
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE...
...YOU'RE JUST... DOING IT *FASTER.*
HM? YOU THINK SO?
...BUT I *TELL* YOU, TORAEMON. I'LL EXPLAIN WHY LATER, BUT...
MAYBE IT'S GOING TO LOOK LIKE THAT...
...THESE LAST FEW DAYS...?
I'M *SHIVERING* IN ANTICIPATION OF A *FABULOUS OUTCOME!*
YES! IF WE KEEP UP THE PACE...

...WE'LL REACH THE NEXT STAGE IN TWO DAYS!
...?
HEY!
ARM'S STICKING OUT.
SORRY.
I CAN'T TAKE THIS...

HUFF...
NO OPENING ANY-WHERE...
...I'M STARV-ING.
GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...

HUH..?
WHAT'S
THAT?

PICKING BAMBOO SHOOTS?
HM? MAYBE NOT?
THAT BAG...
THAT *SIZE*...
.....
.....
.....


HEAVE HO.

END

HAH...
GRRGK!
AHH!
GRRF!
UHHF!
CHECK IT OUT.
LOOKS GOOD. NO BIG STAINS.
MINE, TOO...

SKINS!
DŌA...?
HN?

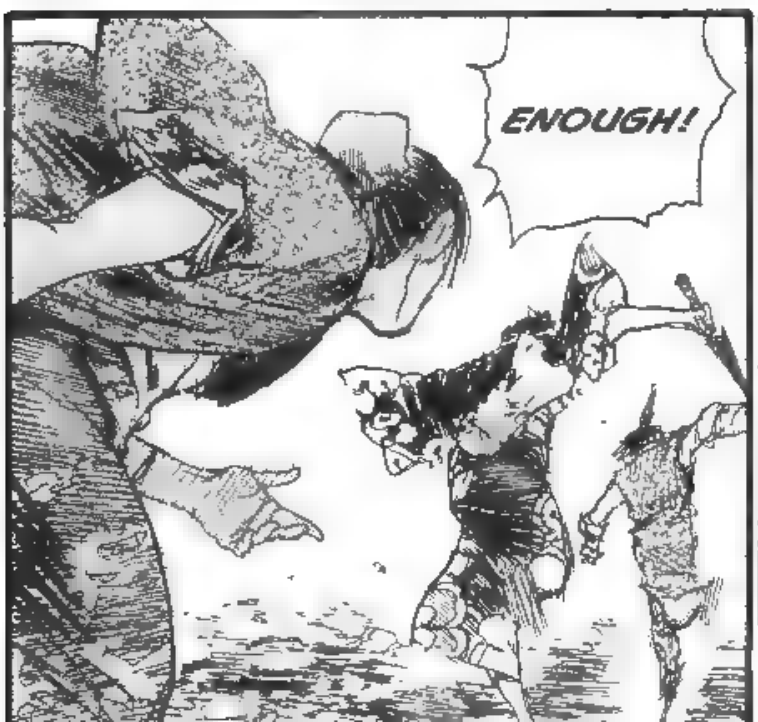
.....
.....
.....
EHHH
?!

AIIIYAAAA!!
DŌA! DON'T!!
.....
.....
.....!

SLASH!
ECCHH!
SLICK
WAAAH!
DŌA...
!!

WAIT!
WAIT!
WAIT!
N-NOT
ME!
WRONG
GUY!

H-
HELLLP...


ENOUGH!

YOU'RE TARNISHING THE ITTÔ-RYÛ'S NAME!

...WHAT... DID YOU...?
DŌA...
TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
cover colors by **RYAN HILL**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *ronin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* which was destroyed by the Itto-*ryū*.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira*, serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

A small, brash Itto-*ryu* warrior, quick on her feet and eager to brawl.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard, a hefty Itto-*ryū* warrior recently imprisoned for a street fight Dōa started.

BURANDO

Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen-chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell beneath Edo Castle, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Kagimura's unconventional head doctor, Burando, is finally released from his own stay in prison, and he returns to the experiments with renewed vigor—and seeming quite insane. In order to deter any emotional attachment for the doomed inmates that he works on, he orders that they all wear crude otter masks. Exhausted and frustrated after spying on Kagimura and Edo Castle for too long, Rin and Dōa finally stumble across a mountain of dead bodies that the "immortality experiments" are churning out. In a fit of anger, Dōa rushes to kill an innocent beggar who is wearing some of Isaku's body armor, and Rin finally reveals that she knows about Dōa's Itto-*ryū* affiliation.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshū*.

Banshu: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Bonsai: Stunted miniature trees created by restricting their growth.

Dojo: A school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts; here, a training center for swordsmanship.

Dono: Archaic honorific used to show respect, usually for someone of a higher rank.

Doshin: Low ranking police officers.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Fujōmon: A side gate for carrying out the dead. Corpses were considered unclean.

Hatamoto: An inner circle of feudal lords.

Ittō-ryū: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Kessen-chu: The "sacred bloodworms." A person infected by them cannot die but feels pain like a mortal.

Mutenichi-ryu: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Nagaya: Literally "long houses," *nagaya* were the commoner's residences of old Edo: long, single-story buildings divided up into small apartments.

Ranpo: Dutch medicine. A generic term for Western medical science, since most Western knowledge entered through the Dutch trading zone in Nagasaki.

Ryu: A sword school.

Sanmawari: Also known as "the three patrols," the *sanmawari* were three groups of *doshin* who performed specific patrol and criminal investigation duties.

Taisei: Europe.

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Makie by Hiroaki Samura—from a series of pinups in which he put *Blade of the Immortal* characters in Chinese dresses. We'll have his final "China Cats" pinup next issue!

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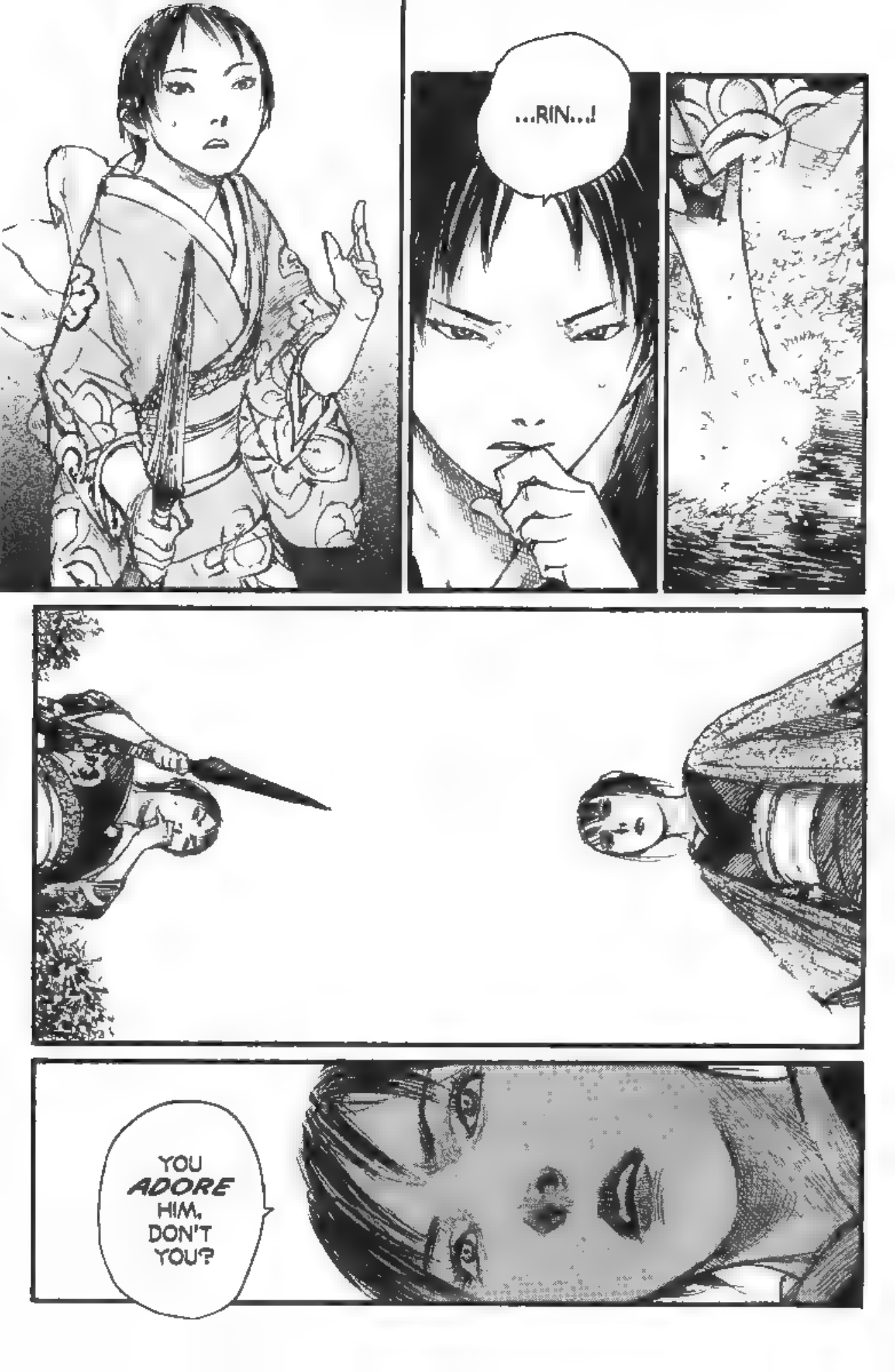
無限の住人

BAREFOOT

-part four-

HOW DID YOU KNOW...?!
DŌA...
SO... IT'S TRUE.
HOW'D YOU KNOW?!

BEFORE... WHEN WE SAW KASHIN KOJI.
NO... TO BE HONEST...
...SINCE THE VERY FIRST TIME I SAW YOU FIGHT.
SOME-THING WAS TELLING ME. DEEP INSIDE.
BUT TODAY... I KNEW.
THE WAY YOU GUYS TALKED...?
EACH WORD, INNOCENT TO MOST EARS...
...BUT START SUSPECT-ING... AND EVERYTHING FIT.
THAT "BOSS" OF HIS. THAT'S...
... ANOTSU KAGEHISA, YES?!


...RIN...!
YOU ADORE HIM, DON'T YOU?

HE'S AN AMAZ-ING MAN!!
I...
...I'VE HAD SO MANY EXPERIENCES WITH THE ITTŌ-RYŪ.
SO MANY, MANY KINDS...
...AND ALMOST ALL OF THEM...
...THINGS I WISH I COULD FORGET.

DŌA. TO YOU, ITTŌ-RYŪ MAY MAKE SPLENDID COMRADES...
...ANOTSU KAGEHISA, A HIGH-MINDED PATRIOT...
...AND THAT'S FINE. I WON'T SAY ANY-THING.
MY STORY IS SO... SO OLD.
SO OLD YOU NEVER EVEN HEARD ABOUT IT.

...IF YOU ARE... THINK.
BUT...
DŌA. I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE ITTŌ-RYŪ.
...UNRE-SISTING PEOPLE? FROM BEHIND?
WHAT YOU JUST DID?
READY TO KILL UNARMED ...

COULD YOU HAVE DONE THAT WITH *HIM* WATCHING?
BUT... BUT ISAKU'S...

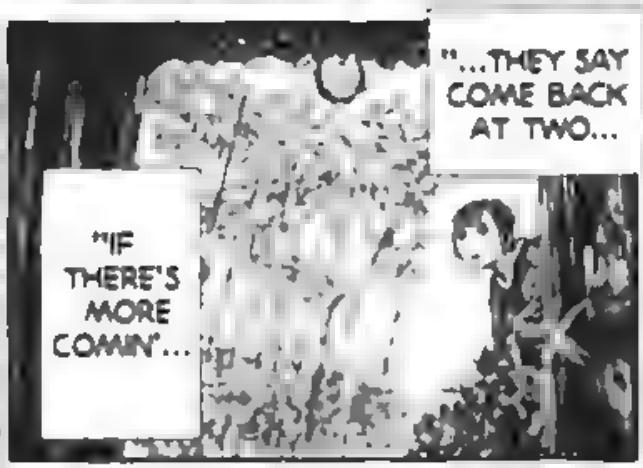
H-
H-
HERE...
THESE ARM GUARDS. WHERE...?
W-WARN'T US, MA'AM. THEM OFFICIALS--
TELL ME.

OFFI-CIALS?!
YOU DIDN'T STRIP THEM?!
O-O-OVER THAR', MA'AM...
GOT 'EM FROM THE BADGER HOLE GUARDS.
DEEP IN THET BAMBOO.
"BADGER HOLE"...?
WE JES' CALLS IT THAT, MA'AM, BUT...
...BUT IT'S THERE! GOIN' DEEP LIKE A BADGER LAIR...

...DON'T GOT A CLUE WHERE IT GO, UH-UHN!
BUT, LISSEN! TWO, THREE TIMES A DAY? THEM DOORS OPEN...
...AN' CORPSES COME OUT! CORPSES!
IT'S OUR JOB T'CARRY 'EM FAR AS THE RIVER.
OFFICIALS SAID THEY'S GONNA CREMATE 'EM...
...BUT JES' LOOK AT 'EM!
WHEN'S THEY GONNA BURY 'EM NOW?
THOSE ARM THINGS? A SAMURAI SAYS...
..."GUY THEY BROUGHT IN WORED 'EM.
"KEEP 'EM FOR A SOUVENIER."

WHEN WAS THAT?!
EH? EH?!
MAY... MAYBE TEN DAYS AGO...?
DŌA...

"WE WAIT BY THE BADGER HOLE AFTER EIGHT...AN' THE BODIES COME OUT.


"IF THERE'S MORE COMIN'...
"...THEY SAY COME BACK AT TWO...

"...AN' SOMETIMES WE GO THREE TIMES A DAY..."

TWO INSIDE. NO... THERE'RE MORE.
RIN. LET'S GO HOME AND GET READY.
EH? READY FOR WHAT?
TO WASTE THEM! THE NEXT TIME THEY OPEN THE GRATING!
DON'T BE STUPID!
WHO'D YOU CALL STUPID?!
OUCH! OUCH! JUST...CALM DOWN!
AND KEEP QUIET!
LOOK, DŌA. THINK A MOMENT.
WHERE DO YOU THINK THAT TUNNEL GOES?

ME?
I THINK IT'S A BACK DOOR INTO EDO CASTLE.
EVEN WHAT KASHIN KOJI SAID!
IF IT IS, EVERY-THING DOVETAILS.
IMMOR-TALITY EXPERIMENTS?
THE SAN-MAWARI ARRESTING FOLK AND DRAGGING THEM IN? GUINEA PIGS!
AND SOME PERCENT... DIE.
ALL THOSE NAMELESS CORPSES...?
TAKE THEM OUT THE MAIN GATES, THE HATAMOTO GET ANTSY.

SO THEY USE THIS TUNNEL TO DUMP THEM.
IT'S A GO-FUJŌ-MON!
SO THAT'S PERFECT, RIGHT? WE BYPASS THE MAIN GATES...
...WHAT'S EASIER THAN THAT?
JUST THE OPPO-SITE.
LIKE THAT ENTRANCE GRATE.
THERE MAY BE LOTS OF THEM.
SINCE IT'S SO WEAK ON THE OUTSIDE, THE DEFENSES INSIDE'LL BE INCREDIBLE.
AND EVEN IF WE CLEAR THEM ALL...
...WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT EDO CASTLE.
RIN! YOU'RE SO USE-LESS!
BITCH, BITCH, BITCH! IT'S ALL YOU DO!
I... UHM... WELL, WE HAVE TO, SORTA, YOU KNOW...
SO... HOW SHOULD WE DO IT?
AND ALL THE WHILE, ISAKU'S...

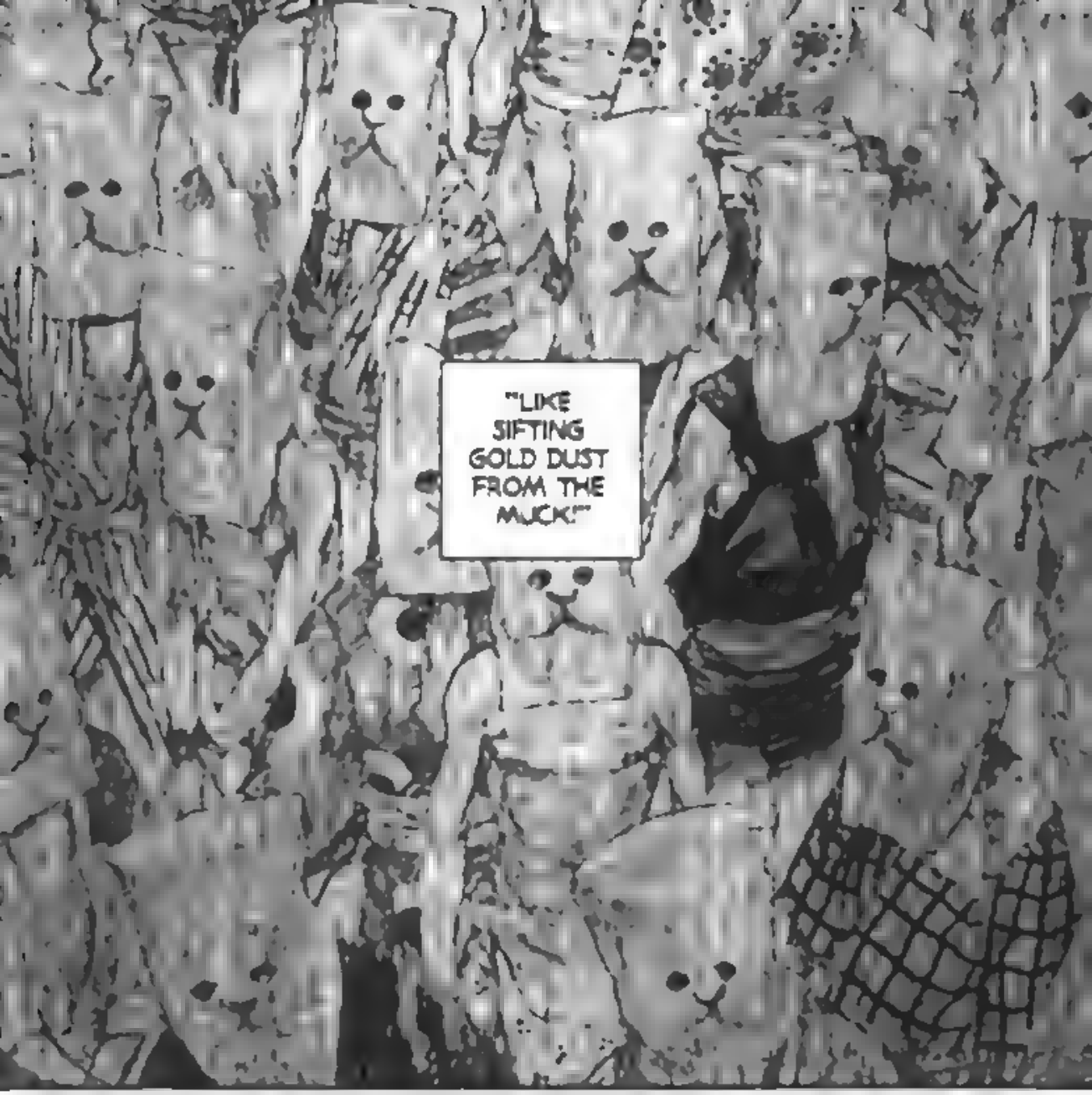
HN? WHAT'S WRONG?
... ... AHHN?
I THINK... MAYBE... WE CAN.
HUH?!

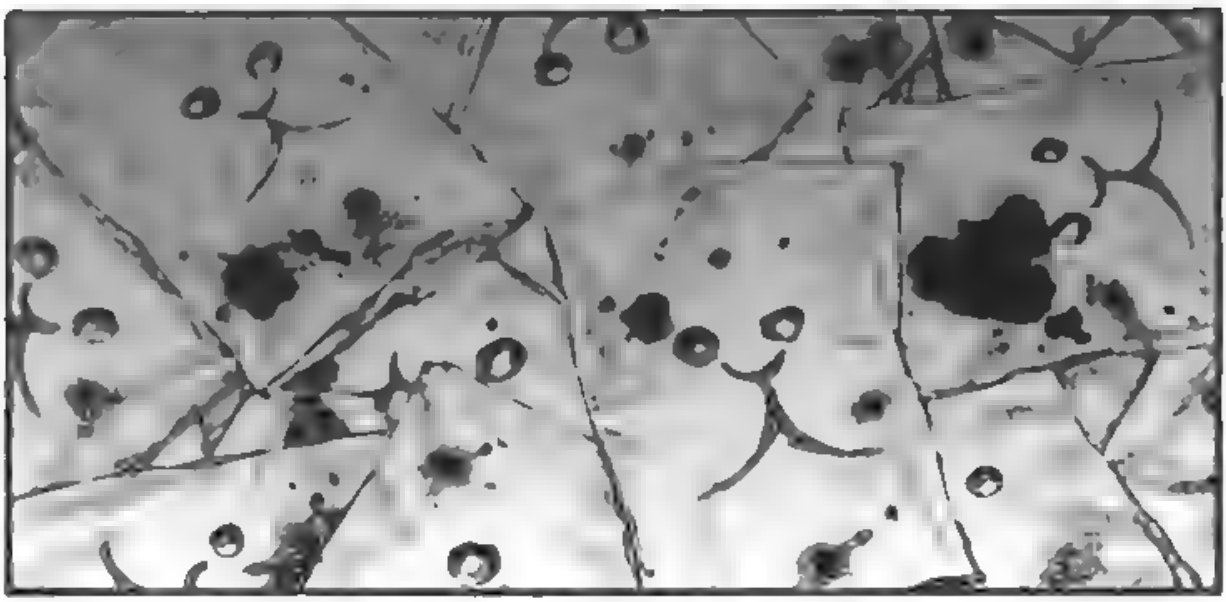
YUP...
IT'LL
WORK.

WHEN I WAS JAILED, IN MY CELL...
..I SAW AGAIN THE NAGAYA OF MY YOUTH.
ONE DAY, A BONSAI ARTIST IN THE SAME NAGAYA...
...TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO TSUGIKI WITH CHERRY TREES.
AH...NEVER HEARD OF TSUGIKI?
IT'S HOW YOU GRAFT BRANCHES AND BUDS FROM ONE PLANT ONTO ANOTHER. FASCINATING. VERY DEEP.
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GRAFT ANY OLD PLANT, THINK AGAIN.
THERE'S COMPATI-BILITY.
FOR INSTANCE...
...CHERRY AND PLUM ARE RELATED. EASY TO GRAFT.
BUT PINE AND PLUM? FORGET IT.
COMPATIBLE AND INCOMPATIBLE PLANTS.

AND THEN... I SAW IT!
COULDN'T WE SAY THE SAME ABOUT MY SURGERIES?
THE FIVE MEN AFTER DEWA DIED.
IF THE PROCEDURE WAS THE SAME. THEN WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?!
PLEASE THINK BACK. RECALL HOW THEY PERISHED...
THE BLOOD IN THEIR BODIES COAGULATED: EVERYWHERE!
AND AS A RESULT, ROTTING LIMBS. FAILED HEARTS AND LUNGS!
BECAUSE MANJI'S BLOOD MIXED WITH THEIRS!
IN OTHER WORDS. BAD BLOOD!
MAYBE. I THOUGHT, HUMANS HAVE BLOOD COMPATIBILITY...!

AND SO, I RECON-SIDERED.
THE TOP PRIORITY *WASN'T* SURGERY. IT WAS MATCHING *BLOOD*.
BEFORE, WHEN I KILLED THOSE FIVE FELONS...
...I WAS *PARA-LYZED* BY FEAR... OF THE *FUTURE*.
BUT THINK-ING BACK...
...*ANY-ONE* COULD GET FIVE WITH BAD BLOOD.
WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM FIVE?
YOU NEED *MORE!* *MORE* AND *MORE* AND *MORE!!*


"LIKE SIFTING GOLD DUST FROM THE MUCK!"



...NNGH...
AH...?! HABAKI-DONO!
IT'S FINE. SIT.
.....
.....
.....
I'M AN ORDER-LY, AND I STILL--
THAT'S AMAZ-ING...
NO. I'M USED TO IT.
ALL THESE GUTS... THE SMELL...?
SIR... DOESN'T IT AFFECT YOU?

TORAEMON. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TYPES OF DEATH PENALTIES THERE WERE...
...IN CHINA?
EH... EH?!
PAR- DON?!
CH- CHINA, SIR? PENAL- TIES?
MM!
THEY SAY THE CONTI- NENTALS ARE CRUEL.
SO, AT LEAST... TEN?
HMPH.
TRUE, IN THE AGE OF WARRING STATES BEFORE THE HAN DYNASTY... AND IN THE THREE KINGDOMS PERIOD...
...THERE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CRUEL PUNISHMENTS. BOILING ALIVE. PICKLING IN SALT.
MEN GROW SAVAGE IN TIMES OF WAR AND DISORDER. IN OUR LAND AS WELL.

BUT IN THE DAYS OF THE HAN, FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS, RECORDS SPEAK OF ONLY TWO.
BEHEADING... AND A STROKE FROM THE SIDE. THAT'S ALL.
JUST TWO, SIR...?
NOW IF YOU WANT CRUELTY, THE PUNISHMENTS OF TAISEI ARE CRUELER, BY FAR.
DRAWN AND QUARTERED WITH HORSES. CUT OPEN AND FED TO THE BIRDS ALIVE.
THEY'VE PERFECTED SO MANY HORRENDOUS DEATHS, YOU HAVE TO ADMIRE THEIR CREATIVITY.
AND THAT'S NOT ALL. THEY HANG THE CORPSES AT STREET CORNERS, UNTIL THEY ROT THROUGH AND FALL...
.....
.....
.....
HEH HEH! TRUTH BE TOLD, I'M JUST REPEATING WHAT BURANDO TOLD ME.
BUT RIGHT AT THE END, HE SAID SOMETHING INTRIGUING...
...DAMN HIS HIDE.

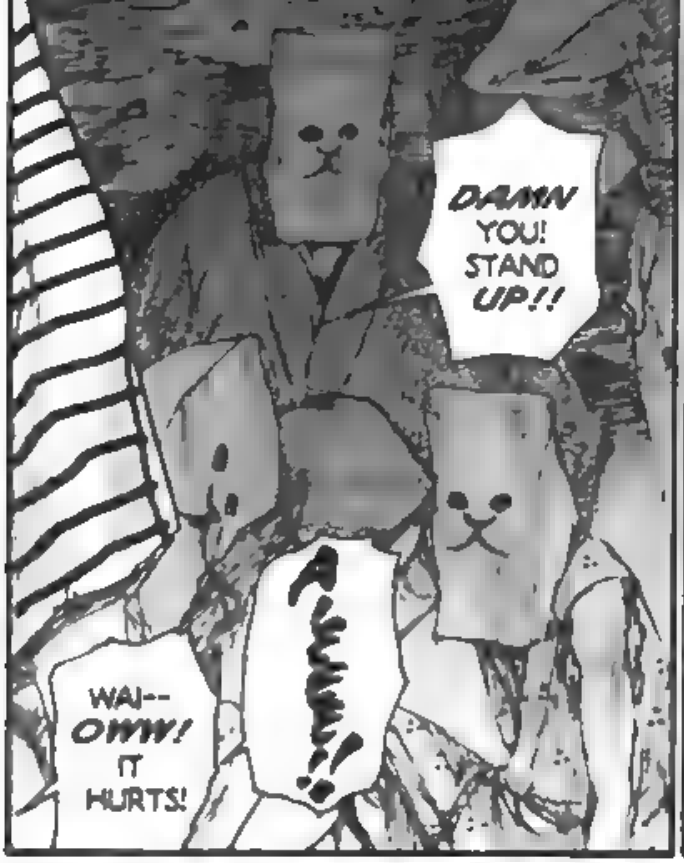
THAT CRUEL-TY GAP, HE SAID...
...IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR MEDICINE AND OURS.
IN THE NAME OF THE LAW, THEY TEAR PEOPLE LIMB FROM LIMB.
SKIN THEM. OPEN THEIR GUTS TO THE SUN.
COUNT-LESS PEOPLE SEE THAT. THE MASSES.
AND THAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODY, WELL...
...THAT, HE SAID, IS THE WELLSPRING OF RANPŌ.
EH HEH HEH!

AND YOU MEAN TO *PROVE IT* RIGHT HERE.
DON'T YOU, BURANDO?

W- *WAIT*, SIR. MY LEGS, THEY--
GET *OVER* HERE! *NOW!*

CAN'T WORK 'EM, SIR. HONEST!

WHAT DO WE DO?
P- PLEASE, SIR...
CAN'T MOVE HIS LEGS, DOESN'T *HAVE* LEGS, DOESN'T *MATTER!*


DAMN YOU! STAND UP!!
WAI-- OWW! IT HURTS!
FWUM!!

.....
.....
.....

IN HIS PLACE.
UH... UHM... I... I CAN GO.

WHAT...?!

NO NEED TO TAKE... A SICK MAN.
IF... IF I'M OKAY, I'LL...

...I SEE...
WELL, TIME'S OF THE ESSENCE.
ARE YOU NUTS?
DON'T DO IT!
.....
.....
.....
KLANG
TO BE CONTINUED...!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by **DANA LEWIS**
lettering and retouch by **TOMOKO SAITO**
cover colors by **RYAN HILL**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI

Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge.

RIN

Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* which was destroyed by the Itō-*ryū*.

HABAKI KAGIMURA

Powerful *bangashira*, serving the shogun and seeking the secret of immortality.

DŌA

A small, brash Itō-*ryū* warrior, quick on her feet and eager to brawl.

ISAKU

Dōa's trusted bodyguard, a hefty Itō-*ryū* warrior recently imprisoned for a street fight Dōa started.

BURANDO

Deranged doctor and pioneer in *kessen-chu* transference.

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessen chu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Imprisoned in an underground cell beneath Edo Castle, Manji is an unwilling participant in Habaki Kagimura's "immortality experiments." Kagimura's demented lead doctor, Burando, increases the speed of the experiments as his sanity slips away. In order to deter any emotional attachment for the doomed inmates that he works on, Burando orders that they all wear crude otter masks. After spying on Kagimura and Edo Castle for a while, Rin and Dōa finally stumble across a mountain of dead bodies and an innocent, simple-minded beggar who takes them to the "Badger Hole" — an entrance to the underground tunnel system that runs beneath Edo Castle and leads to Kagimura's cruel prisons.

designer **SCOTT COOK** editorial assistant **RYAN JORGENSEN**
editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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LETTERS

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GLOSSARY

Bangashira: Head of the *banshū*.

Banshū: Officers serving under the shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the shogun himself.

Bugyo: A high-ranked samurai in charge of keeping the peace, with the help of the men under his command and volunteer "posse" members.

Bugyosho: The Edo-era equivalent of a police precinct station.

Daimyo: Ruler of a feudal fiefdom.

Doshin: Low-ranking police officers.

Edo: Capital of pre-modern Japan. Later renamed Tokyo.

Go Rojū: Senior councilors to the shogun, picked from the most trusted *daimyo*.

Itto-ryu: The radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

Mutenchi ryū: The sword school led by Rin's father (now deceased), destroyed by Anotsu Kagehisa.

Sanmawari: Also known as "the three patrols," the *sanmawari* were three groups of *doshin* who performed specific patrol and criminal investigation duties.

Toshu: Leader, master.

Wakadoshiyori: While the *go-rojū* elders were the shogun's closest advisors, an advisory council of *wakadoshiyori* lords were the hands-on managers of the shogunate bureaucracy.

BACK COVER PINUP BY GUY DAVIS!

Many thanks to artistic magician Guy Davis—creator of comics both marvelous and macabre. Guy's artwork in the newest issue of *B.P.R.D.: Garden of Souls* will be in stores and ready for your eager eyes later this month, with the final issue of that Abe Sapien story arc due in July. Along with his *B.P.R.D.* "Hellboy universe" tales, I highly recommend these other Guy Davis collaborations and solo projects: *The Nevermen*, *The Marquis*, *Baker Street*, *Altens*, *Survival*, *Sandman Mystery Theatre*, and (if you can find issues of the defunct *Métal Hurlant* anthology) "The Zombies That Ate the World" episodes (currently published overseas by Les Humanoïdes Associés in *Les Zombies Qui Ont Mangé Le Monde* collections). Visit Guy's online presence at guydavisartworks.com!

Facing this page, you'll see Nick Black's stunning "Manji and Rin" piece. I met Nick last November at the Wizard World Dallas convention. Keep in touch, Nick, thanks for delivering such a primo piece of work, and I hope you're enjoying warm Gulf Coast weather in Port Neches, Texas! And thank YOU for reading every month. See you next month for our "Life or Death" one-shot issue, in which Yamada Asaemon says, "*taking* a man's life and *wasting* a man's life are two different things."

Philip Simon, editor

Hyakurin by Hiroaki Samura, the last image in his "China Cats" series.

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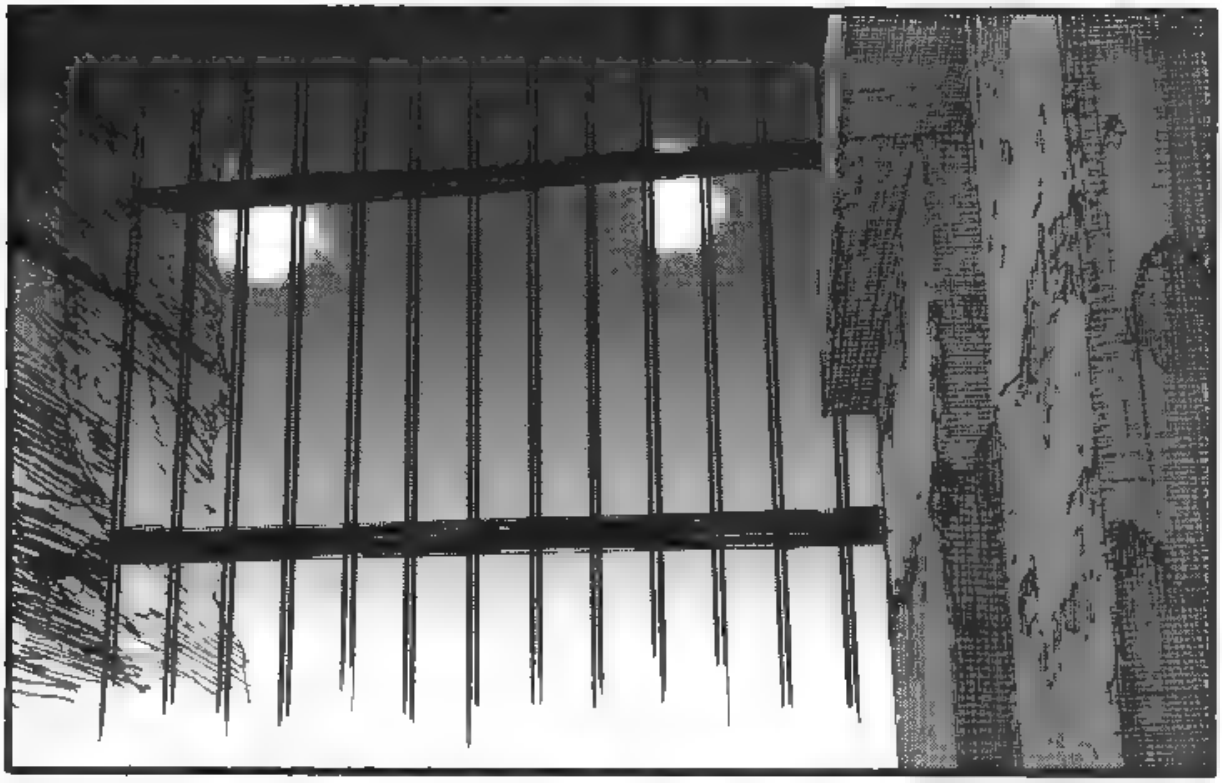
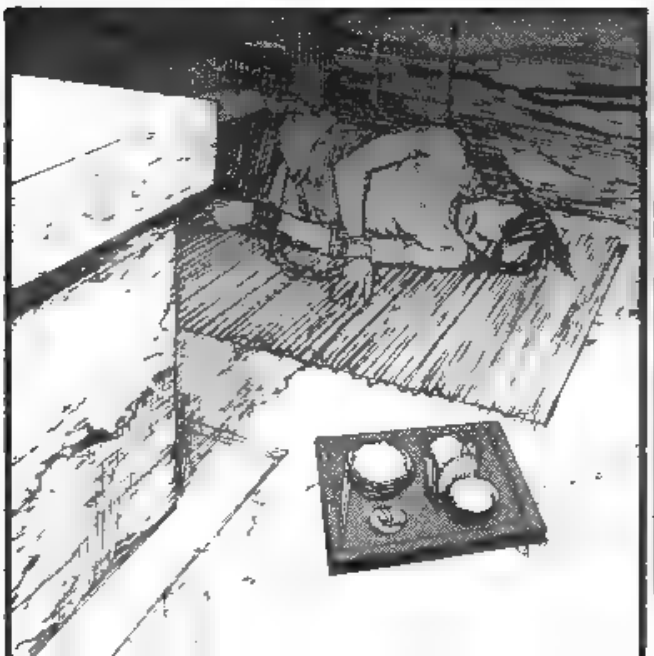
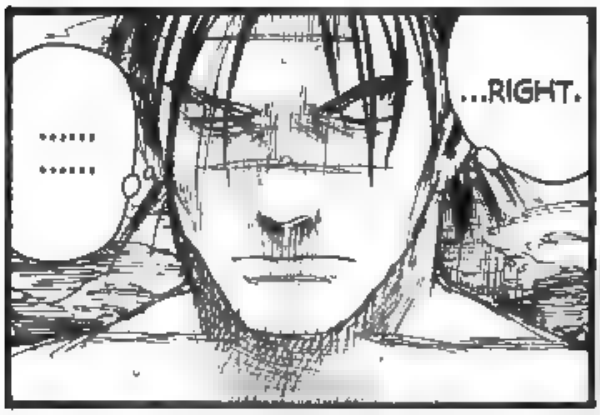




GRARG
...
...RING...
...SHIT!

...AND TASTE-LESS...
.....
.....
STONE COLD...
GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS...?
WHEN THEY KEEP YOU UNDER THAT LONG?
...WHOA.
DON'T FALL ASLEEP WHILE YOU'RE EATING!

TUBE UP MY NOSE ALL DAY...
DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP...
THANKS TO THAT... DON'T KNOW MUCH ANYMORE. WHO THEY'RE DRAGGING IN EACH DAY...
...WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM, NOTHING...
THOUGH, TRUTH IS...
...FROM HOW BAD THE SMELL'S GETTING...
..I CAN PRETTY WELL IMAGINE...
EAT?! IN THIS STENCH?!
BUT... I WILL EAT. FUCK YOU.
THE DAY I CAN'T EAT, I'M DONE FOR.


.....
.....
...RIGHT.

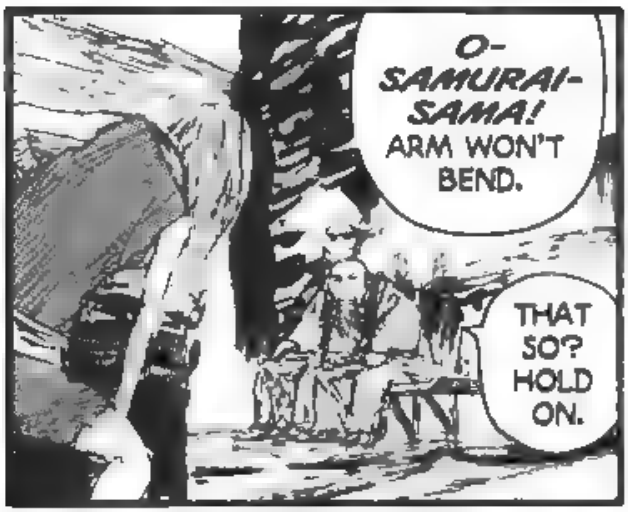
IT'S NOT OVER YET. STILL GOT A CARD...
...ONE SECRET CARD.

JUST NO CHANCE TO PLAY IT.
JUST ONCE. JUST ONE SPLIT SECOND... THAT'S ALL I ASK.

THEY'RE ALL HERE, SIR.
HERE WE GO AGAIN... DAMN BEGGARS.
SILENCE. SILENCE! FIRST OFF-- TOO MANY!
SOME OF YOU LEAVE!
MONEY FOR FOUR! PERIOD!
GO HOME, YOU!
NO. YOU GO!
NOW LISTEN UP! THEY'LL BRING IN BODIES WITH HOODS!
THIS IS WHAT YOU DO! REMOVE HOOD! FOLD LIMBS! STUFF BODY IN BAG!

JUTE BAGS ARE *THERE.*
OH, AND *BEFORE* THAT...
...DON'T FORGET TO SOAK THEM IN THE CHEMICAL BATH!
IT'LL SLOW THE *ROT*, KEEP OFF THE DOGS AND *CROWS!* CAN'T HAVE *CROWS* AROUND THE *CASTLE!*
IF THE LIMBS ARE TOO STIFF, *CALL* ME! I'LL CUT THEM OFF!
WHEN YOU'VE BAGGED THEM, DRAG THEM UP THE SLATS TO THE ENTRANCE. THE MEN THERE WILL GUIDE YOU.
THAT'S *ALL!*
REQUEST DISPOSAL!
HOH! HERE *AL-READY?*
SNAP *TO* IT! GET TO *WORK!*
CAN'T STAND IT...

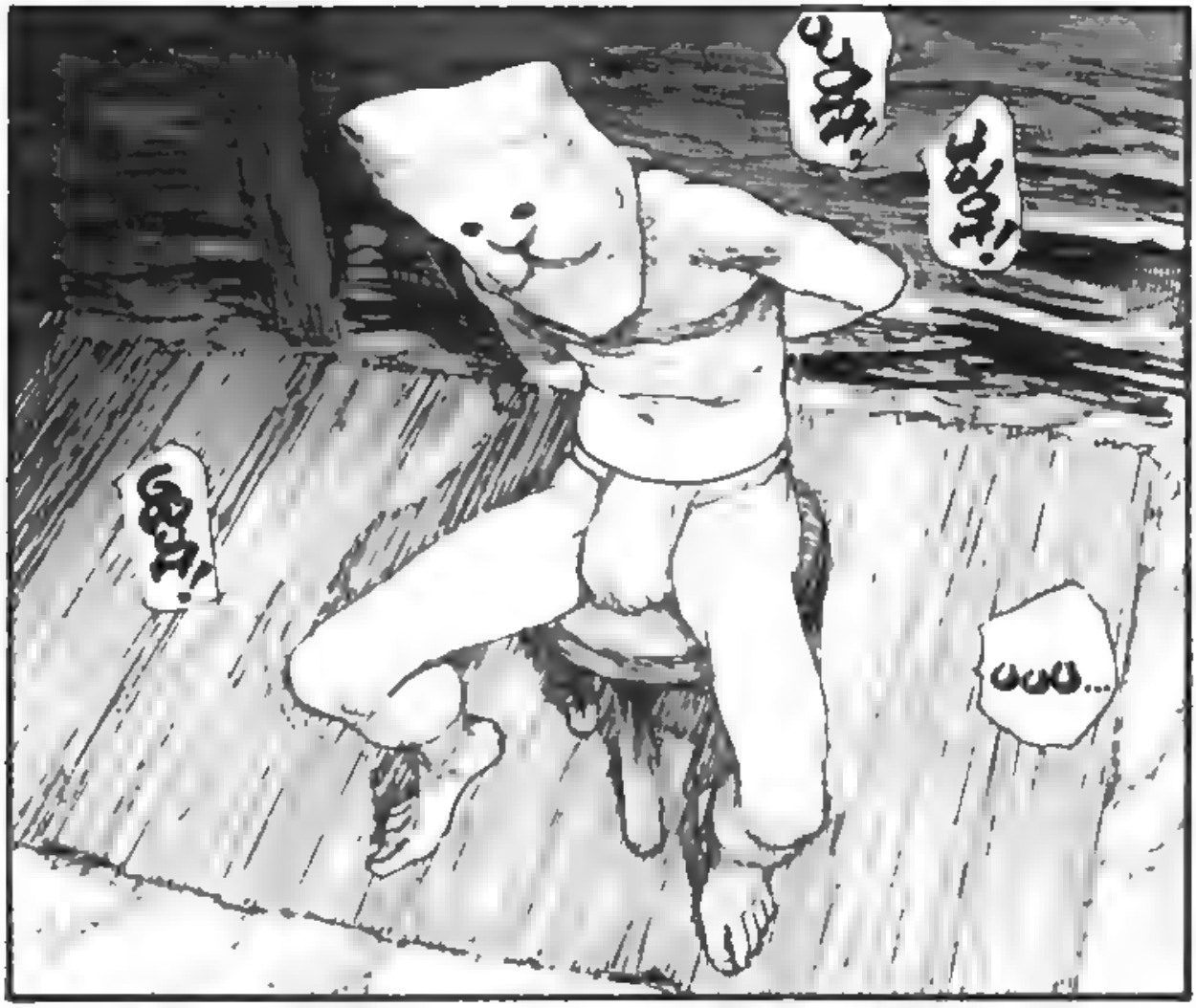
HANG IN THERE. ONLY THREE DAYS LEFT.
MY OWN DAUGHTER WRINKLES HER NOSE...
STINKING BODIES... STINKING BEGGARS... DRIVES ME CRAZY...


O-SAMURAI-SAMA! ARM WON'T BEND.
THAT SO? HOLD ON.

HAH HAH HAH!
NO REST FOR THE WEARY...

whewf..
GOOD WORK.
WHAT THE 'ELL?!
...GEH?!
O-O-O-SAMURAI-SAMAAA!!
WHAT IS IT NOW?!
...?!
WHAT THE--?

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS HAND?!
STEADY. PULL STEADY...
OW! OW! OWW!
WHAT THE... DEVIL'D YOU DO?
JUST GOT A GRIP ON IT T' BEND IT IN...
THAZ WHAT I WANNA KNOW!
.....
.....
WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE...?!


ウオオ!
ウオオ!
ウオオ!
ウウ…

THE DAY HAS COME AT LAST...
...HABAKI-DONO!

...THERE WAS ONE BEFORE... BUT A LITTLE ACCIDENT...
EXACTLY! THOUGH, TRUTH BE TOLD...
CHOK!
YOU SAY THIS MAN IS...?
GUHF...
AH!
YES, SIR. TORA-EMON!
NO MATTER. SHOW ME.
YES, WELL...
...BUT NOT A SURGERY ISSUE... AN ACCIDENT. THAT'S ALL.
SIR!
SO AGITATED HE CHOKED ?!

MGH...
MGH!
FOU!
GUWOHHH!!
YEEOW...!!
YOU IDIOT! HOLD HIM DOWN!
S-SORRY, SIR.

OHH!
OHH!
GUGH
HOH!
SLLK
UUNG...
OHH...

.....
.....
.....
UNLIKE DEWA-NOSUKE, HE'S *NOT* WEAKENING.
GUH! GUH!
AS OF TODAY-- NEARLY *TEN!*
AND *MORE-OVER*, HABAKI-*DONO*, HE'S NOT THE FIRST TO REACH THIS STAGE.

HEH HEH HEH HEH...
AT THIS RATE...
...SUCCESS! BY THE FIRST SNOW.
?!
SWIPP!

WHAM...
MMF...
OH!...!
UHUH...
.....
.....
.....
UNGF...

THOSE EYES...
WAS IT, BURANDO?
...“AGITATION”... WAS LIKE THIS?
I SEE. SO THE OTHER'S...
WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?
SIR... I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN.
IN THE END... THE TOLL THAT THE MULTIPLE SURGERIES AND BODILY CHANGES TAKE ON...
...MIND AND SPIRIT... IS, UH, EXTREME.

I SEE.
IN OTHER WORDS, THIS MAN IS A FAILURE?
B- B- BUT...
EITHER THE BODY WASTES AWAY OR... THE MIND.
IF WE FIND ONE WHO CAN BEAR IT, THEN...!
...IT'S NOT HOPE-LESS!
KCHK
--WAIT! PLEASE! HABAKI-DONO...!
BURAN-DO.
W- W--

I TOLD YOU. IF HE ISN'T UNERRING...
...HE'S USELESS.
THUD
STOP CHANGING YOUR DAMN MOOD EVERY SECOND!
HABAKI KAGIMURA-DONO!!
HRN?!
...!
B-B-BURA--!!

LET ME ASK YOU! JUST WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?!
A HEART THAT WON'T RISK FAILURES...
...OR A HEART THAT OVER-COMES THEM?!
YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO SHRUG AND SAY SORRY! THAT IT DIDN'T WORK!
HABAKI-DONO! YOU'VE GONE DEEP IN DEBT TO KEEP THIS EXPERIMENT GOING.
YOU OWE THE GO-RŌJŪ! THE WAKA-DOSHIYORI! THE BUGYŌ!
AM I WRONG?!
AND ME, TOO!!
I DESERTED MY COUNTRY! I PROVE MYSELF HERE, OR I DIE.
I'M STAKING MY LIFE! ON THIS!

HABAKI-DONO! FROM THE DAY YOU LET ME INTO THE CASTLE...
...YOUR LIFE AND MY LIFE HAVE BEEN ON THAT SURGERY TABLE!
I WILL NOT LET YOU PLAY AROUND LIKE I DON'T EXIST!
GRRRRR!!

RIN! OVER THERE!
WHO ARE ALL THOSE PEOPLE?
...?
MY EYES AREN'T AS GOOD AS YOURS!
...AHH.

I SUSPECT... WOMEN LIKE *US*. THEIR MEN DRAGGED OFF BY THE *SAN-MAWARI*...
...NEVER TO COME BACK.
THEY'VE LOST PATIENCE AND GONE TO THE *BUGYŌSHO*, BUT...IT'S HOPELESS.
I DOUBT THE *O-BUGYŌ-SAMA* HIMSELF KNOWS WHAT'S *REALLY* GOING ON.
OUTRAGE-OUS...

DOESN'T THE OLD FART EVER WORK?!
IF WE COME BACK LATER...
NO TIME FOR THAT!
THIS. LOOKY.
EH HEH HEH! GOOD THING HE WASN'T HERE.
DŌA! YOU CAN'T JUST GO--!
OH...HECK. I DON'T FEEL LIKE STOPPING YOU. NOT NOW.

...FOR ANOTSU KAGEHISA TO ASK HIM TO DRAW THAT...
SO WE GOT THIS.
I DIDN'T THINK HE WAS JUST AN HERBAL-IST BUT...
YOU LOOK, TOO, RIN!
AND THERE'S ONE MORE THING.
HMM... NOT HERE?
WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?
AND WHAT COULD FIT THERE?
!
?
GOTCHA! MAYBE.

NOW WE'RE SET.
SO? WHAT ON EARTH IS IT?
RIN! YOU CAN NEST EASY NOW!
THAT'S "REST" EASY.
.....
.....

TUT, TUT...
OBVIOUSLY NOT AFTER MONEY...!
TINY FOOT-PRINTS. YOU LITTLE FOOL.
YOU WANTED THIS?
DON'T BLAME ME IF THE TŌSHŪ'S FURIOUS.
...YOU FOUND YOURSELF SOME REAL TROUBLE.
NEED TO ACT FAST, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
PLUS, I SEE...
.....
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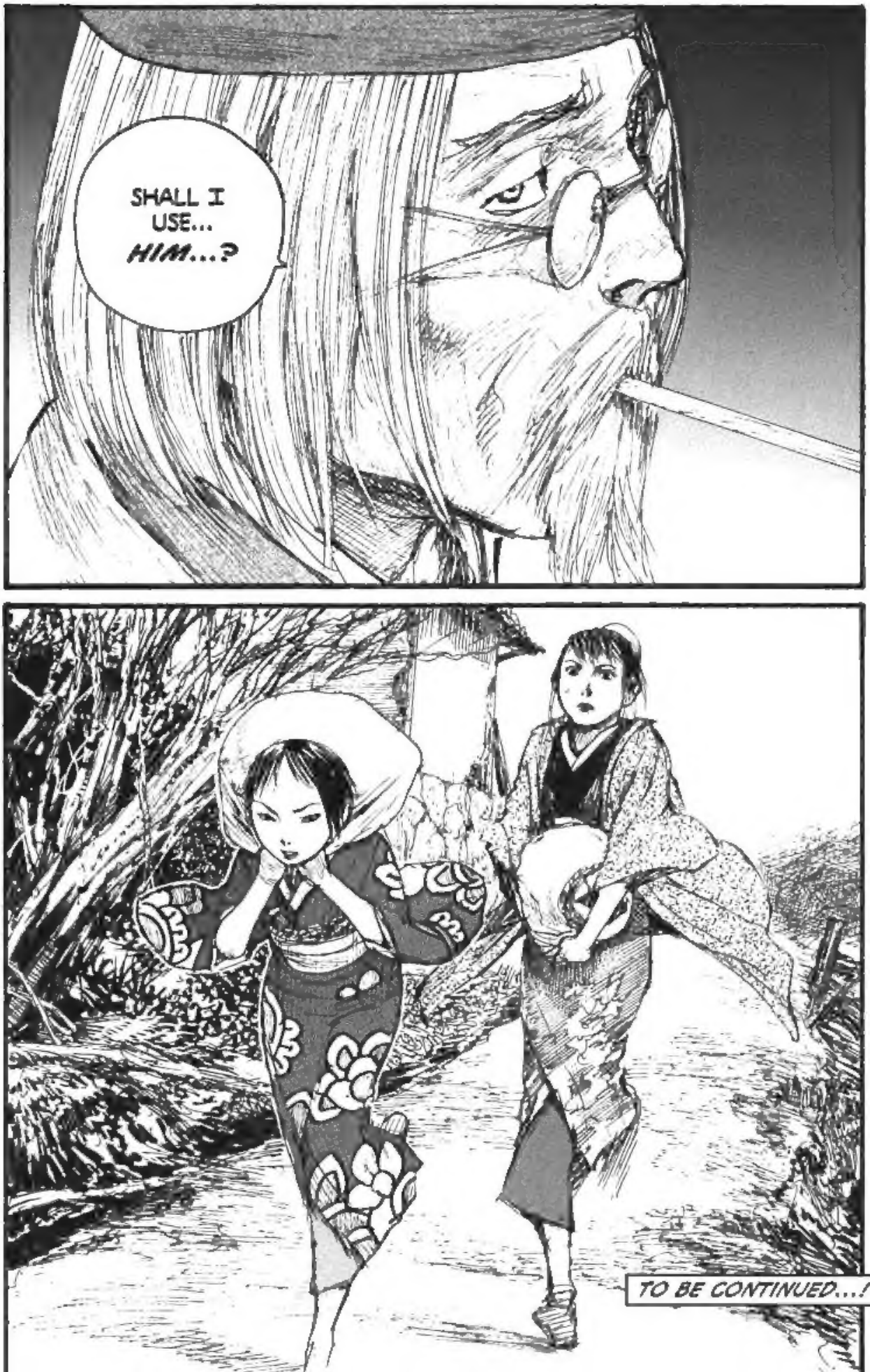
SHALL I USE... HIM...?
TO BE CONTINUED...!

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